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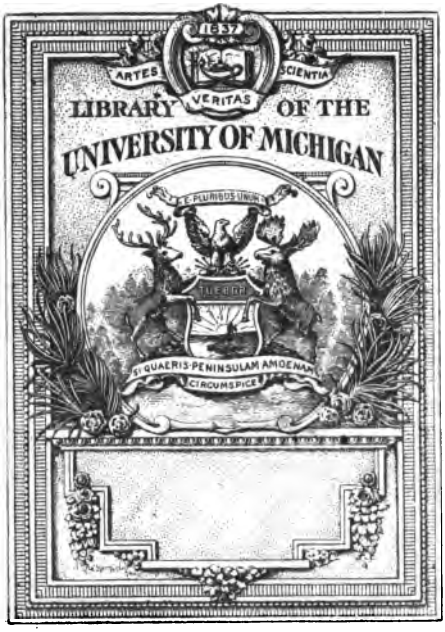

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MY SISTER JEANNIE.

37738

A NOVEL.

BY GEORGE SAND.

Translated from the French

BY S. R. CROCKER.

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MY SISTER JEANNIE.

PART FIRST.

I.

I AM a man of the people. My father, Jean Bielsa, a native of the village of the same name, and consequently of Spanish race, was yet a naturalized Frenchman, and domiciliated at Pau, though away from home a good deal on business. I dwelt there with my mother and my sister Jeannie.

My recollections of childhood are very vague and fragmentary. We were poor; my mother was often sad; there was little talk around us.

My mother was dressmaker for the little community. I, Laurent Bielsa, ran about the streets, doing odd jobs that came to hand, — opening carriage-doors, or even picking up cigar-ends to sell them to the unlicensed manufacturers, who turned them into excellent cigars.

I can remember no farther backward. I was not very apt in the art of getting a living, though active and enterprising enough; but I was indifferent and careless of gain. People were attracted by my pretty face, and presently noticed that it was a good face; and frugal persons took advantage of the discovery by paying me as little as possible. At least, that's what my father said when he happened to have time to notice or trouble himself about me.

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Insensibly to me our condition underwent a change. We lived in a better house; were better fed; and one fine day I was sent to school. Then, when I was ten years old, I was placed in college; and, three or four years later, we fell into the manner of life of comfortable *bourgeois*, used to economy, and of modest habits, but wanting for nothing, and enduring no humiliating dependence.

One day my father said to us, — it was during my vacation: "Children, get ready for a journey. You have studied well; we are pleased with you" (my sister was at a convent school), "and you deserve a reward. I'm going to take you and your mother to the mountain. It is time you knew something of the fine country which is yours; for my family lived there from father to son, and you have never seen it except from a distance. It is time, too, that you knew of your possessions; for your father, who, thank God, is no sluggard, has been able to earn something for you."

This was the first time he had spoken thus; and I was surprised to see that my mother's face remained sad and cold, as if she saw something to be sorry for in my father's joy. Yet they loved one another dearly, and never quarrelled.

This was in 1835. I was thirteen years old, and had begun to reflect and to observe. So, by listening and pondering, without asking questions, or seeming to be curious, I made some discoveries from this time forward.

My mother, who had been reared in a rich family, was better educated than the handsome mountaineer whom she had married for love. They understood one another perfectly, save in one point, — the most important one, alas! — his frequent and prolonged absences.

What did these absences mean? He had no vices. He

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respected and cherished his wife: that was evident. There was, then, in his occupations, and in the sudden growth of our little fortune, a mystery that had never been discussed in our presence, and of which none about us knew. My father was engaged in peddling, in the exchange of provisions, in trade, in fact: that is what he told us, and what no one about us disputed. When complaints were made that he was always travelling, and scarcely knew the pleasure of living at home, he answered: "It is my duty to make this sacrifice. I was young and very poor when I married. I was a simple shepherd. My wife had a little money, which I risked in business to double, and which I hope to quadruple with time and courage. When I have accomplished this, I will not quit my nest; I shall deserve to be happy."

He passed for the best and most honest of men, and, judged from his point of view, he certainly was both; but he was too cunning and prudent not to have something to conceal. Scarcely had we set out on our fine journey to the mountain when I perceived this. He had many acquaintances whom we had never seen at our house. He accosted these with frank greetings, and immediately drew them aside, to talk in low tones and with strict privacy. My mother's eyes followed him with an anxious expression, as if she feared he was going to leave us; and when he came back, she regarded him with a glance in which gratitude and reproach were strangely mingled. He took her hand, or spoke some kind words to her. She submitted; and nothing openly betrayed the strife that was waged between them.

On the road, he questioned me about my studies. I saw plainly then that he scarcely knew how to read or write, and that his knowledge of history and legislation was

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very meagre; but he was well skilled in practical arithmetic, and knew geography with remarkable accuracy.

I may say that I made his acquaintance on this journey, and that I conceived a deep affection for him. My sister, who was only ten years old, had always been a little afraid of his rough ways, his harsh voice, his great black beard, and glittering eyes. When she saw him so good, so tender to us, and so attentive to our mother, she began to love him too.

My mother was delighted to see this union growing among us. "My children," she said to us once, when he was asleep in the carriage, and we were looking at him, and asking ourselves in whispers why we had always been afraid of him,— "my children, love him with all your hearts; he is a good father, who knows more than he has been taught. He knew, for instance, that the best gift he could make to you was a better education than he received, and no sacrifice has been too great for the accomplishment of that end. Try, then, always, as hard as you can, to show your gratitude to him."

"Well said, little wife," said my father, who had awoke and listened. "But the children ought to love you better than me, for it is you who have made me know my duty. I see now that you were right. I know how hard it is for an ignorant man to gain a livelihood; and as my position is irksome, ticklish" —

"That'll do, that'll do," said my mother, interrupting him; and she spoke of other matters.

The end of our journey was the little village of Luz, in the Pyrenees. We passed the night there, and early the next morning went up to the estate that my father had bought on the brow of Mount Bergonz. It was smiling pasture-land, well situated, with a modest house, which

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served as a hotel for visitors spending the season at the baths of Saint Sauveur, and the tourists sojourning at Luz. There was a pretty garden, a servant, and two fine cows. People came there to dine or lunch. My father told us that he made much money there, and would make more, if we would help him in receiving and entertaining the customers; and that his profits would steadily increase, because the baths were becoming more and more fashionable. In a word, this little estate was, he assured us, a real fortune.

My mother seemed to believe him, and, in fact, many guests came to us: rich people who paid roundly for a cup of milk or an omelette, and did not haggle.

We set to work cheerfully. My mother presided in the kitchen; my sister took charge of the dairy, and I foraged in all directions for provisions. I went about buying trout, game, eggs, and fruit. I had to go long distances, as the mountain did not supply sufficient food for the entertainment of guests. This active life in a beautiful region exhilarated me. In a little time I grew so stout, so nimble, and so hardy, that I might have been reared a mountaineer. The bathing season ended with my vacation. My father took us back to Pau, and presently set off for Bayonne, or for some other unknown destination; for he rarely spoke of his affairs, and often, for two or three months at a time, we did not know where he was.

The next year, my mother and sister returned with him to the hotel in the valley of Luz at midsummer. I was to join them as soon as my vacation began; and again spent two months of excitement and feverish activity. "The handsome mountaineer!" whispered my father to his wife; "what a pity" —

"Be still, my great devil," she said; "remember your word!"

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"It is because I do remember it," he answered, "that I am sorry sometimes that I have made my son a *bourgeois*, and not a man."

Such words as these, that I caught by chance, gave me food for reflection. Was not a *bourgeois* a man? How does it happen, then, I thought, that my mother condemns me to this inferiority?

Yet I continued to inform myself, not so much as a point of honor as because I found pleasure in study. History especially interested me. For Greek and Latin I had no fondness; but my exceeding quickness and wonderful memory enabled me, without effort, to keep always among the first in my class.

But I forgot all intellectual preoccupation as soon as I had set foot on the mountain: then the physical man asserted his supremacy. The love of wandering and adventures possessed me: I left our smiling hills to plunge into or climb the most savage and dangerous places. I followed the bear and izard hunters, for large game was still plentiful. I accompanied the guides who led naturalists to Roland's Notch, to Mount Perdu, to the Mallet Tower, to the amphitheatres of Marboré and Troumouse, and to the Cursed Hills. In this way I acquired a taste for the natural sciences, and, when I returned to Pau, studied them with enthusiasm.

My father not only left me free to roam over the mountain, but also shielded me against the mild reproofs of my mother, who was made anxious by my long tramps, and feared I should lose my fondness for study in such development of physical activity.

My promises reassured her, and I kept my word. Every year I took several prizes. My school-fellows, who saw me reading a good deal outside the regular school-course,

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were rather envious of the ease with which I overtook them as the examinations drew near. But they bore no malice because of my good disposition. I was as strong as a bull, and as gentle as a sheep, they said. Was I really, and am I really? I never knew it. My personality never became a question to me except as one of atavism, somewhat fatalistic and not understood. From my father's race I had physical strength, coolness in danger, and love of combat; from my mother, or her Protestant ancestors, my sober manners, my reflective habits, and my rigid conscience. So rarely am I in discord with myself, that I have never deserved credit for doing well under difficult circumstances.

I reached the age of sixteen years without taking thought as to my future. Evidently my father's affairs were prosperous; for our mode of living became constantly more easy, and I heard fifty thousand francs mentioned as my sister's dowry, and a like sum for myself, some day. There was also talk of sending me to study medicine at Montpellier when I had finished my college course. My sister, who was very assiduous in her studies, and very pious, had the idea of becoming a teacher of girls, and thought of taking the degrees preliminary to a diploma. She would not hear of marriage, saying that she should run no risks. My father treated this idea as a childish folly; my mother opposed it gently, but with a peculiar sadness that troubled me.

I received a key to the mystery that for us enwrapped the year 1838 during our annual sojourn on the mountain.

I went out in the morning on one of my grand expeditions, intending not to return till the evening of the next day; but fog having spread over the region that I was

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going to explore with some companions, we came back the same day, and I reached the house at a very late hour. Every one had gone to bed, apparently; and, not wishing to wake my mother, who was a light sleeper and an early riser, I slipped into my room and into my bed without making the least noise. I was tired, and was falling asleep, when I heard my parents talking in the dining-room, very close to the partition that separated us. I listened; and I confess it was not the first time. I had no scruples about the act. For a long time I had felt that I ought to fathom their secret; that the secret which belonged to me by the necessity of things, since some day I should have the responsibility of it, must become mine by the operation of my will. They thought me too young to be trusted with it; I thought myself man enough to accept all its consequences, and to put a stop, by my decision, to the painful difference which subsisted between a pair otherwise so tenderly united.

So I listened. They knew not that I was in the house, and spoke openly and freely. My sister's room was at some distance; the servant slept below stairs; they had nothing to fear. Yet, by force of habit, they spoke in whispers; but, presently, in the excitement of discussion, they forgot themselves, and I heard distinctly.

"Marry him!" said my mother. "Are you a fool? We must think of that ten years hence."

"In five or six years," answered my father. "I wasn't twenty-one when I married you."

"Indeed!"

"So I was too young, you think? I have been guilty of follies; I risked your dowry. It was your fault, my dear; you would have me engage in regular trade. An ignorant fellow like me would only make his drinking

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water at it. So I gained it! But I put some wine in the water afterwards, and my error was well repaid."

"Don't talk of that any more. 'Tis against my will, I call God to witness; but let's speak no more of it."

"Don't talk of it? Well, I'm willing, provided you love me as I am. But hear my plan. Antonio Perez has at least three hundred thousand reals in money and merchandise, and Manuela is his only daughter, the handsomest girl in Spain, as the song says. I'm sure the father would be glad to have a physician for his son-in-law. That always pleases people like us."

"How like us? Is he, then, a man like you?"

"Yes, he is one of our best comrades, — a man of fire and iron."

"Then I don't want his daughter for my son, even if she is as beautiful as you say. How old is she?"

"Fifteen years."

"That is too old."

"Why too old? Are you not two years older than I? Are you, therefore, more plain, less loving and less beloved?"

"Be still, black snake! If this girl has your notions, — her father's, that is" —

"The girl has no notions. She knows nothing. She is like our daughter."

"Where is she, then?"

"In a convent. She has no mother. She has been reared as a rich man's daughter and a good Catholic."

"Ah! you know" —

"I know that that is not a good point in your opinion, Mistress Huguenot. As for me, religion makes no difference."

"Unfortunately!"

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"Perhaps. I will think of it by and by. You shall convert me. But this girl must have been well brought up in the faith of her country and her family. And I tell you she is well brought up, — a real lady. All the students and beaux of Pampeluna are crazy about her. When she goes to church with her companions she can scarcely pass through the glances and sighs of these fine youths. Imagine a slender figure, lithe as an adder, blue eyes with black lashes, a head of hair, teeth, a look" —

"Well, well, one would think you were in love with her!"

"I should be if I were not in love with another, — the only one I have ever loved, the only one I shall ever love."

"Flatterer! What are you driving at? You cannot mean to marry your son at sixteen! and if you think this beautiful Manuela will wait till he comes to manhood" —

"She would wait well enough if she loved him; and she would love him if she saw him; for he does not look like a child, and, without boasting, he is as handsome as she is pretty."

"Ah! that's your purpose! You mean to let them see one another!"

"As betrothed lovers. Why not? The father will consent, I know; and we have even agreed on a meeting" —

"I won't have it!" cried my mother, sharply.

"But think now" —

"I have thought. Never shall my children marry persons in that business."

"Come, come, minx! Do not thus scorn your husband and the fortune he has given you! Your children shall look smart. They will not marry readily according to your

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notions. The matter had better be kept secret. A day will come when particular inquiries will be made; and prejudiced persons like yourself will say that the source of our prosperity is impure. You will be affronted for having looked too high; and our children will have nothing of all this but chagrin and humiliation, even while remaining in their natural sphere. Look; I don't talk about sending our Laurent to the mountain to shoot custom-house officers, or to pass smuggled goods in places where one sometimes falls with them. No; let him be a *bourgeois*, a physician, as Manuela is a *bourgeoise* and a lady; — that's fair, that's right: but let them not have to reproach one another as to the origin of their fortunes or the condition of their families. That would be wise, and for their mutual interest, of course."

My mother seemed to be moved; but nothing would induce her to consent to the interview proposed by my father. She postponed further discussion of it till the next year, and he had to agree to wait till that time. At last I had this dreadful secret! My father was a smuggler! that was his "trade" and his "business." I declare, at first I felt only a kind of relief which was like joy. From the beginning of the conversation I had trembled with fear lest it might be something worse; and when this apprehension was removed, I thought my mother was too severe toward him.

On further reflection, I understood her anxiety and her scruples. She knew enough to feel that all illegitimate trade is a social crime; and I had learned enough of the constitution of society to know that it is impossible to evade any law without striking a blow at the equilibrium of legislation: but in this particular case, as a lawyer would say, I could not think ill of my father for not having

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thoroughly examined an idea that no one had put into his head from childhood; for, like most of the inhabitants of the frontiers, he was a smuggler from father to son. It is really a kind of brigandage; for it is not considered a fault to kill custom-house officers who press you too closely; and the hunt for cheap goods easily becomes a murderous hunt for men. No doubt, my father had not for a long time undertaken such adventures in person; but he made others risk them, — having become, as the closing words of his conversation with my mother revealed to me, one of the chiefs of a kind of secret organization composed of all sorts of persons; most of them more desirous of plunder than of hard work, and some of them fit to be hanged.

In fact, notwithstanding its encouragement by all classes, and the unscrupulous readiness of all to profit by it, smuggling is an economic and social plague. I knew it. I must resign myself to feeling that there is a blemish in me, and to thinking of the wealth I enjoy — beginning with the good education of which I have received the benefit — as the fruits of a sort of robbery committed not only on the State, but on the legitimate commerce of my fellow-citizens.

What could be done in such a case? To entreat my father to return to the path of honesty? I had not the courage to take such a tone toward him; where my mother had failed, certainly I could succeed only at the cost of more grievous disturbances. To express my positive opinion, when opportunity offered, against that kind of business, without seeming to suspect that my father was engaged in it: that, perhaps, I might try some day, by and by, when I should have the right to speak as a man.

Pausing at this conclusion, I tried to regain my composure; but in vain. Another agitation, even more painful,

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took possession of me. I had never dared to look at a woman. I was of perfectly chaste innocence, though deeply moved at the slightest provocation; and here they were talking of placing in my arms the most beautiful creature in the world, — a maiden of fifteen years, — capable of loving me to-morrow if she saw me. What! already? I, a timid student, — I could be loved by a wonderful being who turned the heads of a whole community! I did not believe it; the thought affected me like a witch story: but what an intoxicating illusion, and how to banish it!

I declare that I scarcely thought of making it a crime in her, the fact that she was a smuggler's daughter. My father's observations on that point seemed to me wise and unanswerable. Yes, I must seek in this marriage the means of more effectually hiding, under the bonds of complicity, the common stigma, — a stigma which might be cast on me some day in a higher sphere of life. My mother was wrong, I said, to oppose this coming interview; the thought of which made my heart beat as if it would burst from my bosom.

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II.

I TRIED to seem calm the next day. I pretended that I had overheard nothing; but I became absent and odd, — sometimes sad, sometimes ridiculously lively. I could neither eat nor sleep. I was in love, — foolishly in love, — with a phantom; with a being whom, perhaps, I should never see: for how many things might happen before my father recurred to his project, and my mother ceased to oppose it.

I thought of speaking to them about it; but I should have had to acknowledge that I knew all the rest: and, besides, my love affected me with a timidity I could not overcome. My condition was one of painful embarrassment in the midst of delicious intoxication.

I returned to college, hoping that study would free me from torment, or give me patience to wait for next year. It did not help me. I studied very badly that winter. My mother knew it, and reproached me with a severity which I had not thought her capable of showing. My father went to the fairs of Pâques. I had hoped that *he* would be more lenient. He was even more severe; and declared that if I did not take a prize I should not go to the mountain. So terrified was I by this threat, that I made up for lost time, and gained the usual honors.

After we had gone to the mountain, I tried in all ways to find out if my father still thought of marrying me. I was now seventeen; was I not old enough? But the scheme seemed to have been forgotten. One day some-

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thing was said as to the marriage of my sister, who persisted in saying on all occasions that she would be a nun, or, at least, a teacher. I seized the opportunity to say, loftily and emphatically, that she was wrong, and that, quite unlike her, I wished earnestly to marry young. At the moment I surprised a glance from my father to my mother, as if he said: You see now that my idea was a good one? But she made no answer, save to me: "You are in the wrong as well as Jeannie. One must marry, certainly; but it is best to know what one is doing. You are two children: she is too young to say 'no;' You are too young to say 'yes.'" I persisted, but very awkwardly, and with blushes that I could not hide. "Well," said my father, looking at me, "wouldn't one think he was already in love?" I was going to say "yes," so weary was I of dissimulation; but if I said it, as they never would think of my being in love with one I had never seen, my father would think me a fool, and abandon the thought of letting me see her. I know not what I was going to say; but the word "love" made me blush, as well as my sister, and there was a look of indignation in her steady gaze. My mother bade us be silent, and I was remitted to the puzzle of my destiny.

On the evening of that day I was in the garden, sitting on a bench, my sister near me. I gazed at the stars, paying no attention to her. She said nothing, and seemed unconscious of my presence. She was then thirteen years old. She was tall and slender, a *blonde*, very delicate and pretty. She bore no resemblance to my parents or myself, who were all brown, rather ruddy, and strongly built. In character she was equally unlike my father and myself. All her tastes differed from ours so much that one would have called her affected. She was like my mother only

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in her pensiveness and kindness of heart; but already there was an apparent antagonism between them, since, having been reared by a Protestant mother, she had chosen, they said, the Catholic faith from her infancy. This was surely a very singular thing. According to custom, our parents belonging to different churches, and unwilling to encroach on one another's rights, I ought to have joined my father's communion, while my sister should have chosen her mother's. Just the contrary had happened. I was a Protestant, though I had never expressed a wish to be, as if the vocation of Jeannie to Catholicism was so inevitable, that our parents had to exchange their respective rights.

I do not remember how these things took place, — but at this moment I was thinking of them, — because all my thoughts centred on Manuela Perez. I said to myself that this young girl, brought up at a convent, would spurn me on account of my heresy, and that perhaps this was the difficulty that had brought my father to a stand-still.

I did not hesitate to ask Jeannie. "Tell me," I said, "how it happens that we are not of the same religion."

She started, as if I had suddenly awakened her. "I — I don't know," she answered. "It is, I suppose, because we were baptized each in the religion we respectively profess."

"Have you, then, been baptized a Catholic?"

"Certainly. Do you not remember it?"

"Indeed, no; I was too young; I was only three years old when you were born; and you can still less remember it. How do you know it?"

"Because they did not baptize me again at the convent."

"Protestant baptism, you think, is of no avail?"

"It is hateful. If you had a little heart or reason you would become a Catholic!"

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"I? Surely not! It is, perhaps, unfortunate for me (I was thinking of Manuela) that there is this difference between us. If it could be done over again — perhaps" —

"It can always be done over again if one wishes. Mamma would not say 'no' if papa asked it, and you ought to speak to him."

"Papa will ask nothing of mamma; and, besides, it is too late. I too well understand the superiority of my communion not to look upon a change as impossible and wrong."

Thereupon there arose between us a warm theological discussion; a report of which I spare the reader, for certainly neither of us knew how to use good arguments which could have served our cause. We were only the more passionate, as always happens when there is wrong on both sides. I reproached Jeannie for not loving my mother as dearly as she ought, because she adopted a belief, according to which this good and loving mother — a model of spirit and virtue — must be damned to all eternity.

Then happened a strange thing, which I did not understand till long afterwards. My sister rose in anger, and answered: —

"Be still! You don't know what you are talking about; you are ignorant, blind, and stupid! You know nothing in the world, since you think that I am your mother's daughter!"

"What do you mean?" I cried in amazement. "Has your fanatical religion taught you to deny your own blood relations?"

"No, no!" she answered; "I do not deny my father, and I love him because he is my father. I love my mother because she is good; because she does not pervert me from

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my faith; because she is as loving to me as if I were her own: but I have not sacrificed to her my peace of conscience, and my hope of eternal salvation. She is not my mother!"

"But what you say is impossible, — it is absurd, — it is unheard of!"

"What is unheard of is what you don't know."

"It must be that this is a great secret, since it has been so well concealed. How, then, could you know it, if it was such?"

"I have not known it a long time."

"What! Come, explain yourself!"

"I heard my father and mother say: 'Her mother died in giving her birth;' 'she inherits her delicate constitution from her mother;' 'if she does not wish to marry, why, let her be free.'"

"You dreamed that."

"No, no, I did not dream it: I heard it."

We were summoned to supper; and, noting with what unvarying and spontaneous tenderness my mother treated Jeannie, I thought I had been dreaming myself. I was far more surprised than she; for, if she spoke the truth, there were some extraordinary circumstances in the case that did not strike her as they struck me. The innocent child, — she did not realize that, since my father was married at the time of her birth, she was only a bastard, — a child without name or family. My father, then, was guilty of infidelity, and my mother had been sublimely magnanimous!

I vainly endeavored to recall the circumstances of Jeannie's birth. I was so engrossed with the subject, that I could not help asking my mother if Jeannie was born at Pau.

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"No," she answered: "she was born at Bordeaux."

"Was I there at that time?"

"You were there; but you can't remember it. I think it is time to go to bed."

She had a way of cutting short all questioning. I fell back into darkness. Had, then, my childhood been environed by mysteries? But no. In her excessive devoutness, Jeannie must be subject to hallucinations. I would not question her farther; but I was still sad and anxious. Next to my mother, Jeannie was the being I had loved best. Though the natural impetuosity of my sex had borne me away from her, though the love of study had claimed an important place in my life, I had, nevertheless, a rich depth of love for the little companion of my earliest sports. What my own memory preserved for me very vividly was the recollection of the time when my mother, seeing that I was strong enough to carry this child, said to me, as she placed her in my arms: "Take good care of her. Be more careful of her than of yourself. She is your sister, your sister, — something more precious than all else, — something that you must protect with your life." I had taken this very seriously, as I did whatever my mother said to me; and I was proud of being permitted to take into the air this little child, so lovely, so gentle, and already so trustful of me. I took so good care of her, that my mother let me take her into the fields to gather flowers; and we plucked so many, that I brought Jeannie home, riding on my back or in her little wagon, literally buried in a sheaf of flowers and grass, amid which only her small blond head was visible. Once a painter, meeting us, made us stop, and begged to be permitted to make a sketch of us and our paraphernalia. When it was finished he wanted to kiss Jeannie, and I protested with such dignity as made him laugh heartily.

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Some time later, I wanted to be her teacher. It was I who taught her to read. I came to the end of the task without costing her a single tear. In the country, till I entered college, we were inseparable, and learned ladies called us Paul and Virginia.

After I went to college, we were less intimate; but I loved her none the less. So it seemed to me a cruel thing, — her trying to persuade herself of something that was impossible, in order to cease to be my sister and love me as I loved her.

Yet, gradually, this dream was effaced from our minds; but what was not effaced from mine was my fantastic love for the unknown Manuela. As the matter seemed to be no longer under consideration, I abandoned myself to a romantic scheme that I had projected the year before. I resolved to go secretly to Pampeluna, and try to see this marvel of beauty. I calculated already the number of days required for the journey, and was seeking some pretext to give for my absence, when an unexpected circumstance supervened to facilitate my *escapade*. One morning, my father put a letter on the table, and asked me to post it. Glancing at the address, I felt a chill and a flush. The letter bore this superscription:

"DON ANTONIO PEREZ,
"PANTICOSA,
"NAVARRE."

I was malicious enough to read it aloud, in order to attract the attention of my mother, who was busy at the end of the kitchen. She turned her head, and said to my father: "He lives there, this Perez?" "Yes," answered my father; "that's his home; he is there now with the little girl." Then he approached her, and spoke some words in a low voice. She answered only by shrugging

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the accounts, I was astonished at the disproportion between the high cost of commodities and our low prices. My father said it was necessary to do business thus at the beginning, to draw custom, and make our profits by and by. By and by I found out that our hotel had been only a pretext by which we might appear to grow rich by industry; and that our prosperity really came from smuggling, to which my father devoted himself actively under our eyes, without going from home, and without letting us know who were working in concert with him. The famous Antonio Perez never showed himself; yet an active correspondence was maintained between the two.

Freed from the amorous passion that I had endured, I studied harder than ever, and the next year I finished my course and graduated bachelor.

When I went home, carrying my diploma, and hoping to begin the study of medicine, I found my sister established in the house. She had finally left the convent; and, leading me apart, she said, in her calm voice: "I promised you that I would come back to my mother's guardianship. If I did not keep my word immediately, it is not my fault. My mother wished me to deliberate before I renounced my plans. Now we are agreed; I no longer wish to be a nun; I will not leave my family; I will study at home. Are you pleased?"

"Delighted!" I answered, kissing her; "for I think you are now, and always will be, as sensible as you are good and beautiful!"

She blushed as she said she was not beautiful.

"Indeed you are," I replied. "For a saint like you there is nothing to blush for. God gave you your beauty, and surely He loves the beautiful, since he has lavished it with liberal hands over all the world."

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She blushed still more, and tried to hide her face, as if a brother's compliments had scandalized or alarmed her. I decided that she had not yet become very sensible.

My father was then at home; my vacation began; we were not to go to the mountain this year. He had found a person who had hired the hotel for the season, at a very heavy rent. We were sorry for it. We should go there next year, he told us.

"I was known and liked down there for my low charges. I have got the start of all the other little country hotels. Now the house has a good run of custom. But *I* cannot raise my prices from day to day; that is my successor's affair. They will abuse him; they will joyfully see me resume my place next year; but the advance will be made. People will pay what they ought to pay; so that our affairs will thrive to our hearts' content. Yet, as they are thriving pretty well, I don't want to prevent you from seeing the country during your vacation. I'm going to take you to Bordeaux, where I know everybody. It is a fine city."

I had never seen the sea. The thought of going to the ocean filled me with joy. My sister smiled feebly, and said that she was pleased, too. Mother offered no objection, and we set out.

As soon as we arrived, my mother took Jeannie to dry-goods shops, and bought for her a beautiful suit, which she put on with a little hesitation and some fear. With the nuns she had worn a little uniform that she had never been willing to abandon. I was obliged to tell her that this reluctance was ridiculous. I exerted over her, not an influence, — for, as my mother had well said, no one persuaded her, — but a singular authority. Only a word was needed to make her do instantly what I wished.

When I saw her dressed in a manner suited to her age

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and condition, I was struck by her grace and distinguished bearing; and as she always wanted to be hanging on my arm, I saw, as I walked the streets with her and mother, that every one gazed at her admiringly.

My mother was well acquainted with Bordeaux and its environs; so my father, having established us in a very pleasant hotel, gave himself little trouble about us. He seemed to be settled at the port as if on his own domain. We never went there without seeing him talking with the ship-owners or the captains of merchant vessels, and sometimes with men of doubtful aspect. He seemed to be very busy, but never explained the nature of his employments, though always in good-humor and very sanguine. His even temper made him agreeable to everybody; he was the impersonation of kindliness, notwithstanding his brusque manners and striking face.

It is not necessary for me to tell here of our excursions at sea; of our surprise in the presence of so many strange objects; or of my joy in seeing a great theatre, and actors of tolerable abilities. My sister hesitated to join in that profane amusement. I persuaded her to go, and she was very attentive; but I knew not if she felt pleasure or alarm. There was surely something mysterious in her which it would not do to wound with too many questions.

We had seen every thing; and the night before our return, being with my father at the harbor, I saw approaching us a man with a face not vulgar but disquieting, whom I did not at once recognize. When he was within two steps of us, I turned away, not wishing to be known. It was the famous smuggler, Antonio Perez.

As I had changed a good deal in two years, and my dress differed as much as his own from that in which he had seen me, he hardly noticed me, and talked eagerly,

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apart, with my father. Near by was a steamer just starting for Spain, and I saw that Perez was going to take passage in her. My father seemed to be asking him many questions, and giving him much advice. They were interrupted by the arrival of two women, — one of medium height, veiled, in Spanish fashion, with a mantilla falling to her upper lip; of charming figure; and plying a fan with exquisite grace: the other, tall, strong, handsome, but coarse; dressed like a chambermaid, and laden with parcels. The first, whom I instantly recognized, was the Manuela whom I had seen at Panticosa; but who was the other?

Perez took the arm of the veiled lady, and with her went on board the vessel; the other followed. My father accompanied them to the gangway, saluted the first lady, nodded familiarly to the other, shook hands with Perez, and returned to me.

"Who are those persons?" I asked; and, to account for my unusual curiosity, I added that I thought I had seen them somewhere.

"You are mistaken," answered my father: "you do not know them. That is my friend and partner, Antonio Perez, with his daughter, Manuela."

"Which one?"

"Can you ask? The one who is pretty, and wears the mantilla. The other is nothing but a servant."

"That servant has a very bold look," I remarked, by way of keeping up the conversation.

"Ah, yes!" said my father, with a smile; "she is a bit spoiled. Master Perez is — well, he is not like your father. He is a widower; not very fastidious in his tastes. And this mountaineer woman — but what the deuce were you doing with your eyes? You ought to have looked at Manuela: she's pretty and well-bred."

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"I could see nothing but her chin."

"What the deuce prevented you?"

"Discretion. I am not familiar with your affairs."

"Very good; but I should have liked to introduce you to her and her father. Hold! the steamer has not rung the last bell. Let us go on board!"

I refused. Perez would, no doubt, have recognized me, and I should have had difficulty in explaining my *escapade* of the year before. Only by good luck had my secret been kept; and, besides, I was very much afraid of falling back into my infatuation: the name and the image of this Manuela had troubled me so much! To see her I had walked thirty leagues across glaciers, torrents, and abysses. She was here. I had only a step to take to see her. I dared not do it!

I ought to say, too, that Perez — this man who travelled shamelessly with his daughter and his concubine — was becoming more and more hateful to me. "Where are they going?" I asked my father, with an air of indifference.

"They are going to travel for pleasure and health," he answered. "I believe they intend to make the tour of Spain, and will return by way of Gibraltar. At least they will stop some time at Cadiz. I don't know: they are rich, and will do what they please."

Much good may it do them, I thought. I longed to have them gone, yet I could not leave the spot. My gaze was riveted to the poop of the steamer on board which I had seen these two women go. At last the last bell struck; and as the paddles began to turn I saw Perez bow to my father, and his daughter hasten up on the bridge to wave a farewell. She had removed her veil, and seemed to me as beautiful as an angel: but the wind swept down upon her the smoke of the steamer; a cloud enveloped her; I saw

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only a dim shadow; and presently she vanished. I retained only a vivid impression of her features, and no memory sufficiently well defined to help me to evoke her image in my dreams.

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III.

I RETURNED to receive the orders of my mother, who had given me some commissions. She and my sister had gone out some minutes before. The waiter showed me in which direction they had gone, and I joined them at the end of the street.

"We are going to the cemetery," said my mother; "will you go with us?"

"Why not? One ought to see every thing while one is about it." So I went with them. My mother seemed to know the plan of this immense garden of the dead. She went toward a cypress grove, and taking Jeannie's hand: "My daughter," she said, "I want you to pray with me at the grave of my dearest friend. You did not know her; but if she were living you would love her tenderly, and would always be very dear to her. Pray God to permit her spirit to bless you!"

They knelt together at a modest little tomb, on which I had read these words:—

"To the memory of Fanny Ellingston, Marquise of Mauville. Died at Bordeaux, June 12, 1825."

The name of Mauville, which I had often heard my mother pronounce, was that of the château in which she had been brought up. Her father had been steward of the house. There she had received an education almost as thorough as if she had been one of the daughters of the family; there she had tenderly loved the marquise, who died young and childless; there she had met my father,

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who had been brought from the Pyrenees by the Marquis of Mauville, to take care of a large herd of Spanish sheep. Her marriage had been opposed by the family, who thought Jean Bielsa too poor and too illiterate. Jean Bielsa, then known by his Spanish name of Moreno, hurt by their disdain, had left them, taking his wife with him, to engage in a small traffic, which did not prosper.

That is all I knew of my parents' history; and, on the way back from the cemetery, I questioned my mother about the person at whose grave she had prayed and wept.

This time she readily answered. "Fanny Ellingston," she said, "was an English orphan, a relative of the Dowager Marquis of Mauville, who also was English. Reared from infancy by this lady, Fanny was of equal age and was brought up with myself. She had no fortune; but she was beautiful and charming, intelligent, and wonderfully kind-hearted. We loved one another like sisters. Each preferred the other to the daughters of the dowager, and especially to the young marquis, whose rude and domineering nature terrified us.

"Yet it fell out that this young marquis married Fanny Ellingston, in spite of his mother's opposition. He loved her deeply, and made her love him, though she still feared him. He was very violent; they were not happy together. Perhaps there would have been a better understanding between them later; but she fell ill at Bordeaux, and I had the grief of seeing her die in my arms; for, although I was married, and about to bring Jeannie into the world, she had called for me, and I needed no urging, as you may believe."

I looked at Jeannie, who was listening to the narrative with lively emotions. What our mother had just said

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formally contradicted what my sister had told me as to her mysterious birth.

I wanted to stop and convince her of her error, "So," said I to my mother, "in the midst of such sorrow you brought Jeannie into the world?"

"Yes; she was born a few days later, and her coming consoled me, for no affection can be compared with what you feel for your children."

Jeannie kissed her mother tenderly. I know not why I thought that this was not the thrill of joy that she ought to have felt on discovering the nothingness of her chimera. Some doubts, I knew not what, came into my mind. I wished to have a heart free from them. "This reminds me," I said to my mother, "that I shall soon need my certificate of birth for record at the school of Montpellier. Shall I go to the mayor's office, since I was born here?"

"It is unnecessary," answered my mother. "We have copies of your certificates at home in Pau: you shall have them when you need them."

That was true. When we went home, my mother showed me the certificates, and I contrived that Jeannie should see hers. She was clearly registered as a girl born in lawful wedlock of Adèle Moessart, dress-maker, and Jean Bielsa, trader, of Bordeaux, June 15, 1825.

"You see," I said, when we were alone together, "that your little brain is a trifle distracted, and that I was right in making fun of you."

"So," she replied, "you think I lied."

"You lied as persons do who take their dreams for realities; one doesn't bear them malice, but would like to see them cured."

"Say what you will," she answered, with a sudden fire

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that sometimes flashed through her habitual languor, "I am not the daughter of Jean Bielsa, or of Adèle Moessart. I am a stranger, a child of another race, and another nature. I am not your sister, and you are not bound to love me. I have lived at home more than you have done. I have caught many spoken words that you have not heard. I am not a fool; I am not a liar; I am not even romantic. My mother is dead, and my father is not the Marquis of Mauville."

She did not suffer me to combat this new version, which tended to show that she was the illegitimate daughter of the marquise. She went and shut herself in her room. Afterwards it was impossible for me to talk with her on the subject; she always bade me be silent with singular vehemence, and, strange to say, I lost, from this time forward, in appearance at least, the ascendency that I had had over her. She treated me with extreme reserve, and carefully avoided being left alone with me. This state of things continued at least a year. Ought I to tell my mother of this child's fixed belief? I dared not; my mother had no happiness without alloy. My father, absent much of the time, threw the whole charge of the household and family upon her. He obstinately pursued a career that she did not approve; she was in continual fear of some scandal occasioned suddenly by the discovery of his secret. She loved Jeannie more dearly, perhaps, than she loved me, and this, I thought, was natural. Jeannie's need of care and guidance was greater than mine; therefore she regarded her eccentricities with an indulgence that was proof against all trials; could I tell her that I thought Jeannie a little light-headed? Besides, Jeannie was at an age when young girls are often in this condition; at a crisis of intellectual and physical development which subsides when the flight

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is taken. I thought that convent life had unduly excited her imagination; I hoped she would grow calm under the influence of her wise and patient mother.

In fact, when I came home at the end of my first year of medical study, I found her greatly changed. She had grown more beautiful. Her delicate health had become robust; she was trying earnestly to become intelligent. A talent which had remained latent in her suddenly revealed itself. She was a musician, and played the piano exquisitely. I was passionately fond of music, — felt it in my inmost being. I played a little on the violin, and, as I took deep delight in hearing my sister, I resolved henceforth to exert myself in music so that I could play duets with her.

We lived very pleasantly, though that fact did not prevent us from resuming gladly our duties as tavern-keepers on the brow of Mount Bergonz. My mother took pains to make our business prosper; she hoped, I think, that my father would withdraw from his secret avocation, and that we should be rich enough with the returns of this hotel, or with those of some other and larger one that might be built.

But at the end of the season she said that the place was not a suitable one for Jeannie, who had become too tall and attractive, and was too much noticed. Visitors no longer came to our house to ascend the peak of Bergonz; that was only a pretext for seeing Mlle. Bielsa, and trying to speak with her. They did not think that the daughter of an inn-keeper, well-bred and elegant though she was, would be able to resist their brilliant offers. We were constantly intercepting and burning the love-letters that were sent to her. My mother vowed that she would not come to Luz any more, and my father let the house for three years.

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Jeannie was content with this arrangement. Although she had always accepted the business without seeming to think it beneath her, she began to be annoyed by the glances that followed her, and to suffer from the urgency of her passion for music, which she could not gratify in the country. As for myself, who was always free to take up again, in vacation, my free mountaineer's life, I was pleased at having no longer to perform a guardian's duty around the house. Moreover, since the Panticosa adventure, in which I had been so ridiculously punished for my romantic passion, I no longer loved so well the country of the Pyrenees. I told myself that I had no right to be alarmed at the speck of folly I had seen in Jeannie, since I had myself been crazed a whole year. Was I really cured? No, I was not. I was not so greatly disturbed as to neglect my work; but the dream of that Manuelita, become beautiful again, still haunted me. I drove it away; her hideous father stood between her and me. Yet it was not her fault; perhaps she was very unhappy, humiliated; perhaps I should need to say only one word to her to make her entertain the idea of quitting him. I had loved her so much before my deception! One does not get rid so easily of an idea with which one has lived a year.

Yet I took no steps to learn what had become of her. I intended to be a physician, to have a position, to owe my fortune to myself alone, to support my mother and sister if misfortune overtook my father; and then I loved learning, and gave myself wholly up to it, saying to myself that after all my love-sickness had done me good service since it had restrained me from the rash *escapades* of early youth.

Several months later, my mother, who often sent me very well-written letters, natural and pointed, informed me

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that Jeannie had been asked in marriage by a young advocate, who seemed to be a very good match, and who was a very agreeable gentleman; but she had refused him, declaring that she was too young, and wished to continue, undisturbed by family cares, the study of music, thus far her only passion. "It is certain," added my mother, "that she improves rapidly, and displays surprising powers, so remarkable that I do not dare to show the admiration that they excite in me. I fear lest she may become too absorbed, and that her health may suffer under the continual excitement in which she lives, and which has taken the place of her devoutness, that seems to be wholly forgotten. You find her always what you call strange. I find her exceptional, which is a different thing. Thank God she is well, and more beautiful than ever. I watch over her, and take care that she maintains a good *régime*, for it would not be well to leave this matter to her."

A little later Jeannie, whose talent began to be recognized, notwithstanding her modest, and, so to speak, hidden life, was again asked in marriage, and again she refused the offer. She only said that she desired never to marry; but my mother feared that the match did not please her. I felt no anxiety: Jeannie was yet so young.

I was as happy as possible at Montpellier. I saw my family in the vacations, and my father spent some days with us at these times; once he proposed to take me to Paris, whither business called him. I eagerly accepted the offer; and, although my mother dreaded to have me encounter the perils of what, in the depths of our little provincial life, was still called Babylon the Great, she saw, as I did, that, by virtue of my hard study and good behavior, I was entitled to all opportunities for intellectual development. A peculiar circumstance made the journey

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very pleasant to me. I had made a friend at Montpellier, a fine fellow, of quick intelligence and generous soul, — Médard Vianne, two years my senior. He had already been at Paris, and returned thither. He guided my ignorance; we lodged together; this arrangement suited my father, who was not wont to be very watchful. Vianne came to Pau for me, and my mother asked him to dinner. He impressed her very favorably and won her confidence, and she commended me to his care as if I were a delicate and dearly loved child.

Vianne saw my sister and was struck by her face. She said so little that it was not easy to tell what she was thinking of, and if she was thinking of any thing; but she consented to improvise on the piano, and her genius revealed itself. I was transported, and, when she ceased, I seized her hands and kissed them fervently. "See!" I cried, "all that's in my heart! I am happy and I thank you!"

Vianne was so moved that he could not speak. He was pale, and so was Jeannie. She did not raise her eyes to him or to me, but went and sat down at the window, not seeming to remember that she had occasioned or felt this emotion.

The next day, as the diligence bore us toward Paris, and my father, following his habit, slept soundly, my friend spoke of my sister with an eagerness not common in him.

"Take care," I said: "she is a saint, and you are too young to marry."

"No," he replied, "I am not too young; I shall be a full doctor in a year. I have some property, and you know very well that I'm an honorable fellow."

"Surely, and very much above the market. You know very well that I would say yes, joyfully; but how many

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differences must be reconciled in order to bring about a marriage without clashing! You belong to the old *bourgeoisie* of Montpellier; we are people of yesterday. As a child I played in the streets of Pau with the commonest rabble; you have a clear and certain fortune; we — we have perhaps nothing. That dear and excellent man snoring at your side makes money; but I have discovered that for two or three years he's been speculating on the Bourse, and I believe we're going to Paris to try it again; so that some fine day we may lose every thing."

"All this is a matter of indifference to me," answered Vianne; "and I — I beg your pardon — I wish your sister had nothing in the world, and were of still humbler origin; her desert would still be greater than my own, and I should be her debtor in all respects."

"It's very well to talk so," I said, somewhat surprised. "I thought you more practical, and I congratulate you."

"If you think me romantic," he replied, "I repel your compliment. I think I am absolutely logical in asking of my future wife only that she shall please me, and I hold the opinion of calculating and prejudiced persons to be a hinderance to happiness, that sensible folk ought not to allow. I will never in my life do what I feel to be an inconsiderate act, but I shall be the sole judge of my own conduct, and perhaps what the world calls folly will seem to me the most reasonable thing I could do. For example, never could an empty-headed girl, no matter how seductive she might be, lead me whither I did not wish to go: but a woman of real worth shall govern me as she wills; I will not resist."

Paris interested me much, although I went to see it with that disdain which the rich or cultivated cities of the south affect to feel for the capital. Vianne showed it

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to me in its true light. He knew how to combat and conquer my provincial prejudices. He knew, too, how justly to criticise the corrupt and shameless side of this mighty civilization. If we were not strictly orthodox in point of conduct, we did not blindly yield ourselves to temptation; we made philosophical reflections over two ridiculous suppers, and at the end of eight days quitted the delights of the great city without regret.

I had kept an eye on my father, and assured myself that he had a taste for the spoils of the Bourse. On the morning of our departure I saw that he had something on his mind. His face seemed slightly altered. He accompanied us to the station, and then, some one coming and speaking to him privately, he said that it was impossible for him to leave the city that day, but that he would rejoin us at Pau in a week. Undoubtedly he had received some good news; his face was radiant. I left him without feeling anxiety.

Vianne made a pretext of business at Pau for staying there several days and coming to our house. I saw that he was getting to be very seriously in love with my sister, and I whispered a word in my mother's ear. "Speak to Jeannie about it," she said: "I should be too solemn; she would take alarm; you can speak gaily and triflingly. You will see if she is firmly determined on celibacy."

I acted accordingly. Jeannie seemed not to understand me, and spoke of something else. I returned to the subject a few hours later. "Ah," she said, "you mean what I think of your friend! He is very well bred, and his face is sympathetic. You may tell him that he pleases me very much."

"You have a way of saying things. Are you joking?"

"No! I think he deserves your esteem and friendship;

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but, as for me, all persons are indifferent to me. I love only music."

"So you love only your old professor; it is he whom you will marry?"

"No; he is married; and he is not nice. But I've no need of marrying any one. My love is not of this world."

"Do you still think of taking the veil?"

"No, I mean to keep my hair."

"You are not a devotee?"

"I am better than that: I am a Christian."

"I, too, am a Christian. Do you still give me over to damnation?"

"No, I give no one any more. Have you finished confessing me?"

"Not yet, my dear. Since you have returned to reason and truth, why do you think you will cease to be an *artiste* if you become a good wife and mother?"

"Because I am exclusive. I do not feel equal to having several passions at once. I should probably love my husband; my children I should adore. I should no longer be a musician: I am sure of it. These other passions would perhaps make me very unhappy: one can't look into the future: while music enchants and completes my life, why sacrifice the certain for the uncertain? That's enough; don't torment me; it's useless."

I had to repeat this conversation to my friend Vianne, who went away rather grave; but he saw in it no good reason for abandoning all hope.

"If you are sure that she has no other attachment," he said, "I will wait."

"I am sure of it," I answered. "I can give you my word for it." He returned to Montpellier, where his family was established; and I was getting ready to rejoin him,

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when my father returned from Paris quite ill. I remained with him, and summoned a physician, — a very good one, who, however, was deceived as to the gravity of the attack. He knew how strong my father's constitution was, and did not think that the disease with which he suffered could be protracted or serious. Yet it was. The malady increased with alarming rapidity.

My father had never known trouble. Once in his life he was painfully affected; it was when he saw his wife's dowry melt away in his hands. He had speedily repaired that injury; but this time the loss was more serious. A practical man, he could not resign himself to the loss of the fortune which he had so laboriously acquired. He wanted to die, and died. It was a dreadful blow to my mother, who had always loved him tenderly, a severe affliction to me who regarded him with deep fondness, and who had known him only in his indulgent kindness, and affectionate bluntness. Jeannie was overwhelmed, and wept bitterly. I know not if she persisted in regarding him as not her father; but she mourned him very sincerely, and exhibited a profound sensibility that touched our hearts. We hid our tears from our poor mother; we wept in secret, but together, and we promised to love one another as much more now that we had lost him who had dearly loved us.

When we came to settle our affairs we ascertained that my father had accumulated an estate of three hundred thousand francs; but he wanted to become a millionaire: he had risked and lost nearly two-thirds of his capital. What was left to us included the little house, half-city, half-country, that we lived in at Pau, the hotel in the Pyrenees, some shares of stock, some debts more or less good, — among which was a loan to Antonio Perez, the

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evidences of which did not seem to me to afford satisfactory security. My poor father, proverbially upright in his business affairs, had felt full confidence in this Perez, who inspired me with none at all.

It was a matter of twenty thousand francs. That was something to us. When I saw that resignation had succeeded to the first grief in our hearts, I thought it was my duty to put our affairs in order as speedily as possible; it was my firm purpose henceforth to gain my own living as soon as I could practise medicine, and to leave my share of the estate to my mother and sister.

All the debts were paid and settled so speedily, except the twenty thousand francs due from Perez, that I made a demand on him, but without obtaining a satisfactory answer. I learned that he was then at Pampeluna. By the advice of my lawyer, I took with me the necessary documents, and started for Spain.

The desire of seeing the real Manuela had no influence on my resolution. Under the affliction that had fallen upon us, I had almost forgotten her. But when I caught sight of the towers and steeples of Pampeluna, a certain nervous feeling that I knew very well came upon me again, like a chronic malady. What's the matter, I asked myself, mockingly: have I time and heart enough left for playing the part of the romantic school-boy?

This feeling increased, and was aggravated by a violent beating of my heart, when, having ordered a room at an inn, I turned my steps toward the Hotel of the Parador General, the finest in the city, which had been mentioned to me as the usual quarters of Don Perez de Panticosa.

I was surprised at the smile with which the servant of whom I inquired, made answer: "Absent."

"How long?"

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"Fifteen days."

"For a long time?"

"Indefinitely."

"Is it known where he is?"

"God and himself know."

Irritated by this marked laconism, I demanded an interview with the proprietor of the hotel, a fine man, with a gentle and thoughtful face, who looked at me with an appearance of apprehension. "Antonio Perez! You are looking for Antonio Perez? Are you one of his friends?"

"Not at all; but I have business with him."

"You will not find him here. He is — gone! Perhaps he owes you money?"

"You seem to think that in that case I shan't find him anywhere."

"Just so; he owes me money too, and it is money lost."

"Is he ruined?"

"Ruined! Antonio Perez, the smuggler? Oh, no. He has run away, taking money that he owes to all who have had business with him."

"He is a scoundrel then? I suspected as much."

"Be sure of it: he is the meanest of men. He has squandered all his estate, and no doubt he is going to America to enjoy the fruit of his rascalities."

"Is there anybody with him?"

"Do you call her anybody, — his mistress, the dirty Pepa?"

"There is no one but her with him?"

"The last time — no; he left his daughter elsewhere."

"In a convent?"

"In a convent? Come now!"

"I have heard it said that she was educated in one by the nuns."

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"That's true. She was there, I believe, two years. She committed a peccadillo there, — went away one night with a young officer; poor thing, she was so pretty, so beset. The father, hearing of it, went in search of her, declaring that he would place her in another town. They went to France, and soon returned. He took her to Madrid, where, it is said, she had another adventure. He pretended that she had run away with an Englishman; others say that he sold her for a large sum to a Russian, and, as he is quite capable of doing such a thing — but if you want to find your man, seek information in Madrid; perhaps you will get some clew. No one here can tell you more than I've told. But if you wish to breakfast, I will give you a chance to talk with some persons of the town."

I ordered a suitable breakfast, and invited my host to share it with me, in order to make him talk further. He became quite communicative, and introduced me to some notable persons of his acquaintance. I heard the most shameful, the most foul things, about my debtor. I trembled with fear that I should hear my father's name among those of his friends; but it was not mentioned. I avoided speaking of Manuela, but they told me more about her than I cared to hear. According to some, she was an unsophisticated girl, interesting, and much to be pitied; according to others, a crafty little coquette, who quickly broke away from her connection with the poor young officer in order to receive from the paternal hand, not a more generous husband, but more lucrative intrigues.

I spent the rest of the day in gathering information in the town. The next day I went to Madrid, where indications confirmed those at Pampeluna. It was thought that Perez had gone to South America, where he had already

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been engaged in the slave-trade. As to his daughter, for, in spite of me, it seemed that people were bound to enlighten me about her, men spoke as of a pearl of beauty, and pitied her for having such a father. It was not known what had become of her: there were several stories; but there was no room for doubt, — she had taken the bad road that lay open before her.

I returned by way of Panticosa, where I spent several hours. To ease my conscience, I undertook to gather information here too; but I very soon saw that I had fallen into a nest of smugglers, who were afraid to answer my questions, and suspected me. If they had any grudges against Perez, they had been in too close complicity with his enterprises to betray him. They evaded my questions about him, and insisted on speaking of the gentle Manuela, beautiful, kind, and good, who was benevolent in word and deed to all, when she lived in the country, before she went to the convent at Pampeluna. They had not seen her since; it was believed that she had married some great man in Spain.

I went home on foot by the mountain, going by way of Luz to receive the rent from the lessee of the hotel at Bergonz. There I got my breath. I was not afraid to hear my father spoken of; he was known only in the most creditable relations. I saw that he was regretted by so many honorable persons, that I was confirmed in my opinion that he had carried on his illegal business very carefully. I was not deceived; time brought me many proofs of this. He was a type of that inconsistency which leads some very prudent and good men to be easily duped by clumsier knaves, and to find themselves implicated in dangerous matters in which they have no concern.

I consoled myself, moreover, by the reflection that if

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he had made any profit from his connection with the vile Perez, we had gained no benefit from it. So far as that was concerned, we were ruined. What remained to us must be considered as having been legitimately acquired by our joint labors, for the hotel was profitable. It yielded us three thousand francs per year. The man who hired it fleeced his patrons pretty well, but the greater the rush of travellers to the baths of the Pyrenees, the higher the prices they were accustomed to pay, and the Bielsa House made no exception. I passed a dreamy and quiet day there. Every thing reminded me of my father, and the brief but sweet moments of tenderness which I had shared with him. During his short and fearful illness, he was gloomy and silent. He died without explaining what his disease was, ignoring, seeming to wish not to think of, our future, quitting the world like a man chagrined and made desperate by having lost his cause and failed of his end. I had never noted in him any reproaches of conscience. He stood against the law, like some savage who despises human institutions, and who, in his hut, becomes gentle, hospitable, and sociable.

Thinking thus of him, I felt more keenly how much confidence and deference I owed my mother, who had always striven to withhold from him the government of his children. Whither would he have led me, had he made me the comrade of Perez and the husband of the latter's daughter?

I tried to think calmly of that Manuela, who, unconsciously, had already played so marked and so varied a part in my life. I praised myself for having never seen her since my first journey to Panticosa; yet, who knows if my love might not have made her a good woman? Most of those who had spoken of her to me pitied her, and those

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who had known her never so slightly seemed permanently impressed by her. I tried to recall her image. She had left on my heart a memory which wore the face of an angel. Was there in her something exceptionally charming? Or had my imagination borne the whole expense of her seductiveness?

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IV.

I RETURNED to Pau, and told my mother of the fruitlessness of my journey. She took her resolution, saying that she would live with what we had, and, by foresight and economy, would keep us from discomfort. "Don't speak of me, and don't trouble yourself about me," I said to her. "I will be a burden on you only long enough to complete my studies, which are to be more earnest and eager than ever before."

I left her to resume them, and to regain, by great efforts, the time I had been obliged to devote to family affairs. I found my dear Vianne, always industrious and wise, speaking of my sister always as of his ideal, but not thinking of her constantly, and not losing his spirits as I had lost mine in the first year of my passion for Manuela. Naturally, without revealing any thing that concerned my father, I had told him of this adventure. He was astonished to find me, with my strong physique and bright face, so impressionable and so romantic. "I notice one thing," he said to me: "it is that, according to the character, the physiognomy, and the tastes of a young man, you can determine the tendency and predict the course of his life, save on one point, wholly independent of all the rest, and very mysterious — not to say illogical — the nature of his thoughts about love. I think I know, by looking at you, that you are active, full of courage, naturally chaste, very generous, and prone to chivalrous devotion. All this does not warrant me in denouncing you under the shelter of some enormous folly in utter discord with your happy instincts, because I do not

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know how you will love the woman. What you tell me astonishes me, and seems to belong to the lymphatic nervous temperament of some pale student of Hoffman's weird fancies, while your organization is that of a hunter or a herdsman of the Spanish mountains. I shall study you further in this relation, and will tell you what I discover; so that, if there be any accidental danger, you may save yourself from it, and if any fatality, you may combat it. I am not one of those who believe organic fatality invincible."

When, some time afterwards, this subject having, by chance, been brought up again, I permitted my friend to see that I felt some concern about, a kind of compassion for, the daughter of Perez. "You regret," he said, "that you could not have tried the fine experiment of marrying her to make her a good woman? I do not say that you would have foundered, because I know nothing about her; but I return to my study of your manner of loving. You are one of those who have a silly self-confidence, and who, under the pretext of respect for human nature, think they sanctify what they touch."

"Don't mock me," I said. "I know not how to defend myself against raillery. You know very well that I am a rustic, who acts by instinct, who has nothing to do with theories; that I do not know myself, and consequently neither despise nor vaunt myself. I feel drawn to pity and protect weakness. I do not ask myself if I can save it, — sanctify it, as you say. I hasten to succor any one who falls into the sea, without knowing if I shall drown with him."

"You believe that; then you think so, — you are sincere, I have no doubt. But, in plunging into the sea, you count on your strength and activity. If you were

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sure of perishing without saving any one, you would stay on the shore; or rather you would plunge in, moved only by self-conceit."

"Do you call the duty of setting an example self-conceit?"

"Oh, yes, to set an example! There, that's what I fear for you. You are too idealistic for the world we are called to live in. You are capable of many fine things; but I would rather be sure that you will do something reasonable. Now, if there is any thing in the world that demands the supreme control of cool reason, it is the study of the science that we are pursuing. A physician must not obey the impulses of the moment. Even in desperate emergencies, I contend, he has no right to listen to his heart or his imagination."

These conversations occurred frequently, and we wandered sometimes a hundred leagues from our starting-point. This was not, perhaps, very profitable; for it happens, in these discussions between young people, that each places himself on ground that he comes to regard as his exclusive property, although he may have held it with only moderate tenacity in the beginning; but youth lives only in theories, and present society lives only in practice. Far from redressing in our maturity the errors of our inexperience, it seizes our beliefs or our passions, for the profit of its own, when it does not sacrifice us to narrower interests.

Yet such was not my destiny or my friend's; and if I mention our friendly differences, it is because, in thinking of the unexpected issue they brought to him, I cannot help laughing a little.

At the end of our five years of study, Vianne and I were admitted physicians on the same day. He was twenty-six years old, and I twenty-four. He accompanied me to Pau,

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confiding to me his intention of addressing my sister, if she did not prevent him by an unmistakable declaration. I had little hope in his behalf. At twenty-one, Jeannie was the same as at seventeen, — more beautiful, and a still more brilliant musician, but putting away the idea of marriage unhesitatingly and without regret. My mother always respected her wishes in this matter, and did not press her. Yet Vianne was the most eligible husband that she could ever hope for. He was so favorably circumstanced at Montpellier, that he must, without any trouble, speedily acquire a good practice. He had property in his own right, no father or mother to quibble about the birth and fortune of his lady-love, and no authority over him, save that of an old uncle who saw only through his eyes. He would gladly have taken care of my mother. He had a house at Montpellier, and our house at Pau could have been sold or rented. His suit deserved consideration, my mother admitted; but she said that it was not necessary to trouble Jeannie about it. The only chance of success lay in the possibility that Vianne, seeing her from time to time, — not every day, — might at last please her.

He established himself in our village for some months, under the sufficiently plausible pretext of taking care of a friend who lived there, and I started for the Pyrenees, whither I went nearly every year, to spend a few days in looking after our little property.

This time I remained longer. The old physician at the baths of Saint Sauveur, who had long been friendly to me, had always wished to see me take his place. He talked of retiring, and, as I was a licensed practitioner, advised me to take measures to obtain his post, promising to help me, and to cover, by his co-operation, what might for a time be alleged in my disfavor, my youth and inexperience.

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I was so well known in the country, that there was little opposition to be apprehended. Yet I asked for time to think about it. The practice was a good one, but the season each year was very short. It would be necessary for me to settle in one of the neighboring places, where people live in the winter, and where I could support myself on a regular practice. I saw no such place near by; every one was occupied, and there was no hope of a vacancy. In order to satisfy myself as to this point, I stayed a week. I was quite undecided as to the theatre of my first appearance as a physician. Doing any thing at Pau was not to be thought of. There were more doctors there than were wanted. I had never thought of settling there; but I did not want to go too far from my family, and even Luz, my mother thought, was rather distant. Chance — shall I say chance alone? — was to solve the doubt.

One morning, in going to the sheep-folds, — that is, to the cluster of cottages in the pastures on the brow of Bergonz, — I had proceeded half an hour's distance from our hotel, when I saw two travellers arrive who were making the ascent, — one on foot, the other in a chair. The former was an Englishman of distinguished appearance, whose pleasant and well-preserved face told of fifty years, while a slight stiffness of his limbs, and his wholly white hair, told of sixty. The one borne in the chair by two stout mountaineers was a young lady of twenty-four; rather pale, rather tired, exceedingly pretty, and very well dressed. They had no guide; none is needed for the ascent of Bergonz, which is neither intricate nor difficult.

I already knew by sight nearly all the invalids and tourists in the neighborhood. Yet these persons I did not know. They must have arrived the very last evening, or perhaps that morning.

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They stopped at the hut, and the old shepherd hastened to offer them milk. The young lady refused it, saying that she had just breakfasted at Bielsa's — that is, at my tenant's — hotel. The gentleman said a few words to her in English. She was not an English woman, for she made him repeat them, and seemed not to understand. Then he said in French, which, by the way, he spoke very well: "We must let these good porters rest, and give them something to drink." He asked the shepherd if he had any wine. The latter always kept a few bottles secretly, for he had agreed with the hotel-keeper that he would sell nothing but milk. I saw that, on account of my presence, — though the matter did not concern me, — he hesitated to answer. So I went away that I might not embarrass him, and went higher up the path.

I descended some minutes later, and did not intend to mount to the brow, where every pebble was familiar to me; but I was not sorry to see again the pale and charming face of the young lady. Yet I was weary of seeing the prettiest as well as the ugliest lady tourists. I had been a hotel waiter long enough to learn to look upon these birds of passage as game beyond my reach. Only, as at my age one always looks with interest upon these more or less winged passengers, I had acquired a certain degree of discernment. I could instantly distinguish a legitimate companion from a chance acquaintance; a giddy English lady from a painted adventuress; a Parisian of boisterous manner, but belonging to good society, from a courtesan more tastefully dressed, and affecting a higher breeding. My father, who lumped them all together, and my mother, who understood nothing of the matter, were astonished at my perspicacity, when, at a glance, I told them to what species or variety certain persons belonged.

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So I retraced my steps, and scrutinized the lady. I was surprised that I could not exactly define her condition. Her attire was unexceptionable: a mixture of French elegance and British comfort. She was a French woman, and belonged to this Englishman; yet she was not his daughter: she did not resemble him, and spoke his language stammeringly. She was as likely to be his mistress as his wife; but if she was, she was the woman of his choice; for he followed her step by step, offering her his hand to help her climb a rock, and stooping, though he was not very supple, to remove a branch from her path.

I was surprised to see them still there, walking around the sheepfold, and seeming to be waiting. The shepherd told me quietly that one of the porters had been taken suddenly ill, and begged me to go into the stable, where he was lying on the litter, rolling about in the agony of a violent cramp in the stomach. The man besought me not to tell his travellers. It will pass away, he said: give him five minutes' rest, and he'd set out again.

I knew the fellow, — knew that he was subject to cramps which did not pass away so speedily. I forbade him to set out, and gave him a sedative that I had in my pocket. The other man I told to go down to the hotel, where, perhaps, he would find a second porter. I took upon myself the task of explaining to the travellers the accident that detained them.

"Well," said the young lady, "let us go up on foot. We can easily ascend on foot, can we not?"

"Quite easily," I answered.

"No," said the Englishman; "a three hours' walk is too much for you, my dear. I shan't consent to it."

"Does it take three hours?" she said, turning to me.

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"Not more than an hour and a half from this point," I replied.

"Well, tell that to *my husband.*"

I glanced at the Englishman, who was inflexible.

"It is a very simple matter," he said to me. "You may carry madame's chair with the porter who remains," and as I smiled, he added: "I will pay you your own price."

I was dressed in all respects like a mountaineer, as usually during my stay in this region; the shepherd, who had known me as a boy, *thou'd* me; the mistake was natural. I did not get angry, but refused the offer, saying that no one had a right to be a chair-porter not having a license, which I had not.

"Then wait," said the Englishman.

"No, we won't wait," replied his wife; "this porter shall go in search of another, and they can join us higher up. The old shepherd, or this young man here," looking at me, "shall be our guide, and I will walk. Come, my friend, consent."

"Yes, with a guide to help you; but the shepherd is too old, and this young man is not a guide at all."

"That's no matter," I answered. "I can act as guide on the brow of Bergonz, where tourists encounter no serious danger."

Why I made this answer, which was to shape my destiny, I know not. There are moments when we are unconscious of the impulse which drives us. This impulse came from the seducing and playful look that the young lady cast upon me. I took, with a movement of surprise, which was instantly suppressed, the paletot and parasol which the Englishman carelessly threw over my shoulder, and marched off in advance.

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I was piqued by an indescribable curiosity, even while under the influence of an indescribable fascination. This young lady recalled the emotions that I had felt at Bordeaux, when I saw for two or three seconds, the charming face of Manuela Perez. She was, as well as I could remember, a type of the same family, neither tall nor short, rather thin, very graceful, with brown or black hair, eyes of clear gray or blue. But this one had more dignity and less fire. She was a Parisian of pure blood; her accent forbade the least doubt of it.

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PART SECOND.

I.

I WAS, as I have said, under fascination. I ought to add that I felt, at the same time, a strange mistrust. My education, my natural temperament, the influence of my atmosphere, had made me a compound of ardor and reserve; I credited myself then, even in my own eyes, and probably under the influence of Vianne, with a certain power of scrutiny and scepticism; I stood at the very point where youth and inexperience resumed their rights.

The young lady, who puzzled me somewhat, walked in advance, leaning on her husband's arm; yet they did not *thou* one another. He called her Hélène; he vowed that she did not fatigue him. She answered that she was sure she did, and that he ought to let her walk alone. This question was soon settled; the path became too narrow, and she had to go between us. Then it grew steep, and the Englishman wanted to walk on the rocky bank that he might prevent her from being dizzy. She was alarmed for him, and when I had seen him stumble twice, "Pardon, sir," I said, making the most of my Southern accent, for their distrust amused me, and I tried to prolong it,— "from the moment when you took me for a guide, a responsibility rests on me. You must let me take madame, and go ahead yourself."

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He complied with the ease of a gentleman who could not be jealous of a peasant. I walked on the counter-fort of the path; she rested her little gloved hand on my shoulder. When an obstruction confronted her, I lifted her over it, putting my arm around her waist. We walked in this way half an hour, and to me it was only a promenade. The young lady was agile and light, but the Englishman was perceptibly out of breath. "Poor dear friend," she said aloud, as if speaking to herself, once when he remained behind, "this is too hard for him; he thinks he is always young."

"And he is young no longer," I answered, affecting simplicity, prompted, perhaps, by a not very noble sentiment.

She turned and looked at me, at first with a sad expression; but she grew red as if she were humiliated by the implied comparison. I wished to have her speak to me. "Pardon me," I said, "you did not address me — I thought — I am a guide only for the occasion."

"If you are not what you seem to be, what then are you?"

"A very ill-bred man, — a hunter of bears."

"Ah, it is fine to be a bear-hunter! Have you killed many?"

"Many."

"It's dangerous, isn't it, bear-hunting?"

"Very."

"And were you never afraid?"

"If one is afraid of the bear, one is lost, and look at me" —

"How do you kill them?"

"In the old fashion of the country, — that's still the best; you wrap your cloak around your left arm, which

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you present at the instant the bear attacks, and with your right hand you bury your knife in his heart."

"Ah, it is terrible! It must be more exciting than the bull-fights I have seen in Spain."

"You come from Spain?"

"No, I come from London; but I have seen Spain too. My husband is very fond of travel."

"And you too?"

"I'm rather tired of it; but here he comes; don't speak of bear-hunting; perhaps he would want to try it, and I should be too anxious."

"He is a good husband, then?"

"He is an angel," she said, looking at me fixedly, as if to say that a woman like herself did not fear the indiscreet familiarity of a man like me.

At the same time with the gentleman, the two porters overtook us, with the chair. The young lady entered it, begging me not to leave her husband alone. I did not think it necessary; yet I was reluctant to leave them, and when he said to me, "Come with us, my friend; I do not like to have disturbed you for so little," I thought I had a chance to refuse his money, and might accept the walk.

He tried to follow the chair, but soon had to give it up, and as his wife did not see him, having gone forward, he claimed my arm very politely and affably. I had taken him for a rather ridiculous old beau. I saw that I was mistaken; he was a charming man, struggling against the first advances of old age, in order not to be burdensome and disagreeable. "I have been a famous pedestrian," he said, as he paused a little, "not a bold mountaineer like you, but an eager and nervous hunter, thirsting for action and peril. See how age has made me feel its weight. I shall keep going as long as I can, and then I will resign myself."

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"You are right to struggle," I told him; "but you must not do too much. How old are you?"

"I don't conceal my figure, — sixty-two years; and you, my child?"

"Twenty-four; but don't talk; your breath is short; you have asthmatic symptoms. I will not tell you that you must go no farther. I hold the contrary opinion. I have seen asthmatic sufferers whose disease was not too confirmed, cured by moderate but continual effort to restore the affected organ to its normal function."

"Why," said he, pausing again, "you talk like a physician, better than a physician, for mine prescribes rest for me."

"I am a doctor in a small way; in the mountains one must know a little of every thing. Will you let me listen to you a minute? Breathe as well as you can."

"There!"

"Well, that's not bad; you can be cured, if you are patient and persevering. Walk every day, but not so much as to-day: you've done enough."

He looked at me in surprise. I had betrayed myself; I was tired of my part. We came up toward the chair. Porters, it is well known, move rapidly, at a gymnastic step. The young lady had bidden them to stop, so that her husband might come up. She alighted and came to meet him. "I want to walk now," she said; "and you must ride."

He refused; in her presence he dissembled his fatigue, and I thought I saw in his anxious glances that it was not necessary to pronounce the terrible word *asthma;* but I thought it my duty to insist, and she thanked me for it.

"Dear friend," she said to him with caressing grace, "you are not well to-day, — you do not walk as usual.

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If you refuse," she added, lowering her voice, "I shall think that you do not love me."

He seemed to be conquered and yielded. The porters bore him away at great speed: he was lean and light. In an instant I found myself alone with *her*.

"We two, now, Mr. Doctor," she said, readily taking the arm that I offered her. "My porters have told me fine things about you. You are an enrolled physician at the age of twenty-four, which is very nice; you belong to a very honorable and respectable family; you are going to be the partner of the physician at the Baths of Saint Sauveur; in fine, you are a distinguished man, even a man of society, when you choose to be. And you make fun of poor travellers; you deceive them with a borrowed dress; you give yourself out as a bear-hunter, when you are M. Laurent Bielsa, owner of the pretty house and the fine piece of land where we stopped just now. Why do you play this comedy, I ask you; and what pleasure do you find in making ridiculous persons whom you do not know, and who have never injured you?"

I answered that I had not offered my services, that they had claimed them without asking me; that I did not blame her for the mistake; and that I accepted a lesson due to the rusticity of my person and my dress.

"So it is my husband you mean? You would be very wrong; he is rather absent; and it must be confessed that the habitual possession of wealth inclines the English to think that with money one may command services of everybody, as the first comer; but if you knew Sir Richard Brudnel, you would pardon him all. He is the most affable, the most benevolent, the greatest, the best man in the world. Come, forgive him at once; or, indeed, I will not forgive you for having deceived me."

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"How have I deceived you?"

"How indeed! How many bears have you killed, brave hunter?"

"If you had questioned your porters, they would have taught you better. I have killed seven bears, whose claws you might have seen in a festoon at the door of my hotel. We regaled our friends and customers with them, and I shared the bounty with my comrades."

"Then — I give it up; you are an extraordinary man, and we shall be compelled to apologize to you."

"I accept your excuses," I said gaily; "as for Sir Richard, peace is already concluded: I have given him a consultation."

"Ah, do you mean that he is ill?"

"A very little. He will live a long time."

"May God hear you! For that good word, and to seal the pardon that you grant us, give me your hand!"

I took the little hand in mine with strong feeling, and I did not dare to shake it. "Come now," said she in English, "*shake! shake!* You know English, I'll bet. As for me, I shall never learn it; it is a dreadful language. I love Spanish; I learned it very quickly: but really I love only French, France, and Paris."

"Were you born there?"

"Of poor parents, as people say; my childhood was spent in humble circumstances; later in life I have been rich and not happy. Sir Richard loved me; he has been my providence. Now I have nothing to desire."

"Had you been married before?"

"No. Why do you ask?"

"I thought I understood —"

"Ah, my story would be too long, and not amusing.

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Tell me about yourself. Are you really going to establish yourself here?"

"I don't know yet."

"Aren't you going to think of marrying?"

"It is too soon."

"You are not, then, in love with any one?"

This blunt question made me blush like a girl, and I answered that I had not yet loved.

"Why is that?" she pursued, as coolly as if she were questioning a young girl."

"I haven't had time."

"Oh, yes! study, duty. You are an earnest man. M. Brudnel's youth was not so pure. It seems that he was one of the most seductive men of his time, and at your age he had already had brilliant adventures."

"He told you of them?"

"Never. I have heard of this. But what am I talking of to you? I am stupid. I have a habit of thinking aloud; my education was backward and defective. It is my husband who has civilized me with patience, with angelic goodness."

The ascent became too steep, and she stopped talking, though she was in an expansive mood.

I grew thoughtful. I felt powerfully drawn toward her. She seemed to me simple, good, and irresistibly gracious; then again, she seemed to lack tact and to be too bold for my taste. It was quite possible that Sir Richard had made in France what is called a *mariage de garnison.* His age had made him indulgent to that innocence of which he had seen only the charm, and to that lack of education which was apparent to my eyes, now dazzled and now deceived. It may be thought, perhaps, that I was very difficult for a man in so humble a condition. I

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was, despite Vianne's sermons and myself, an idealist naturally inclined to look beyond the compass of my vision.

Moreover, I had before me a standard of comparison, — the husband, of whose distinction this wife had the right to boast. One saw in him natural aristocracy, developed by thought and will. Yet she, too, had been born refined. Her physical nature was of the highest grade, and must have repelled instinctively whatever was low or even coarse; but there was not sufficient culture, or, rather, intelligence was wanting.

Reaching the summit, M. Brudnel viewed the country. It was a beautiful day; the air was clear; and, as it was the first time he had travelled within the Pyrenees, I could point out to him all the features of the wonderful panorama unrolled before us. There was not a hollow or a ridge that I had not gone over, and of which I could not fluently give the geologic history, the fauna and flora. Although the gentleman was already enlightened about me, he did not let his knowledge appear.

"Thanks, doctor," he said in the most natural tone, when he had exhausted the chapter of questions. "You are a valuable guide, and happy are they who fall in with you. We shall be very sorry to leave you. Won't you prolong our pleasure a little by dining with my wife and myself, either at your hotel or at Luz when we go down? Say which, and say yes, or you will grieve me sincerely."

I accepted the invitation for Luz, where I had business in the evening; and, fearing I should be indiscreet in staying longer, I was about to leave them; but they detained me, and I acquiesced. We went down on foot. Mme. Brudnel now and then took my arm, and we had been some moments together, in which I ceased to be disturbed

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by her vicinity. She was certainly an amiable person, kind, eager to please, and not at all coquettish. I noticed that she was as gracious to her porters as to me. The preoccupation, or, rather, the continual movement of her mind seemed to be a flow of benevolence. She had natural intelligence; did not try to disguise her ignorance, questioning and descanting *apropos* of every thing, — a strange, docile, good child, adorable in her graceful solicitude for her old husband. She exhaled a perfume of candor which forbade me to doubt that she loved him above all things. He was so charming himself that it could not be wondered at.

She talked but little at dinner; she was tired, and soon withdrew. They were to start early the next day for Bagnères de Bigorre. I thought I ought to take my leave; but M. Brudnel detained me. "Let me talk with you a little more, doctor: I have some questions to ask you. Come and smoke a cigar with me on the balcony."

We talked about his health. "I am not unreasonably engrossed with myself," he said, offering me the best cigar I had ever smoked. "But when I do think of myself, it is for the purpose of coming to some decision, and conforming myself earnestly to it. Was it mere talk, or were you in earnest, when you told me just now, on the mountain, by what *régime* I could, if not cure, at least save myself?"

"I spoke deliberately, and in pursuance of a firm conviction."

"Then you are in direct disagreement with my physician, and I believe you are right, because his treatment weakens me; and when I go contrary to his directions, I improve. He was an amiable and distinguished young man, whom I attached to my poor person, and who accompanied me in my travels. We have separated in consequence of this disa-

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greement. I think he was tired of our wandering life, and wanted to have me settle in some large city where he could build up a practice. That was his right; yet I do not think he will gain by the choice he has made. I paid him a salary of ten thousand francs: it was a good position for a young man, and he was free to quit me at any moment."

"You think," I replied, "that he was deceived as to the nature of the treatment you needed? Nevertheless, before absolutely espousing your opinion, I must know you and study you further; above all, I ought to resort to auscultation."

"Very well, — at once," he answered, briskly; "come into my chamber."

It appeared, from my examination, and from his answers to all the questions I had to ask him, that he was still strong in resources, and might live ten years or more without constitutional infirmities. I approved his manner of living, not continual travel, but frequent locomotion and changes appropriate to the phases of his disease. The case was one for study, and in which he could be his own physician.

I was about to retire, but he still kept me. "Are you determined," he said, "to be a physician at the baths?"

"I had almost decided not to be;" and I stated my reasons.

"And at your home, in Pau?"

"There is no opening now in southern cities of considerable size, I am told."

"Then you have no defined plans, and are free? Accept my offer."

"Your offer?"

"Didn't you understand? I want to pay you a salary of ten thousand francs, on the condition that you will travel

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with me, or remain with me as long as you shall find it pleasant and advantageous."

Surprised at this prompt resolution on the part of one who did not know me, I demanded time for reflection, and added that, if I should accept, it would be on the condition of engaging myself at first for only one month. I was not convinced that Sir Richard needed to spend ten thousand francs per year for a physician, if he could cure himself unaided.

My scruples increased his desire to secure me. "I give you a week to think of it," he said. "You must have time to make inquiries about me; but I do not agree to your month of trial. I am sole judge of the moral need I may have of a physician. Come, go and consult with your friends and family; and if it is No, write to me *poste-restante*, at Perpignan, in a week; if it is Yes, join me there."

He gave me his card, and I left the next day for Pau.

My mother was greatly surprised, and trembled at the name of Sir Richard Brudnel. "He!" she cried. "I thought him fixed in England for ever, and you say he is married?" She asked me many questions about his wife and himself. When I had told her the little that I knew about the wife, and all the good I thought about the husband: "As to that," she said, "you are not mistaken. He was a very worthy and very good young man, highly esteemed in the Mauville family; but I have so lost sight of him. — And then, whither will he not drag you, since he is so fond of travelling?"

"His journeys are neither distant nor dangerous, because he has a young wife, who does not share his taste, and who seems to be not very strong."

"And is he very much in love with this young wife?"

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"I think he lives only for her."

"He is rather old for her to reciprocate his passion. You are young, and not bad-looking; don't you fear that he will become jealous of you?"

"We can separate the day we cease to have confidence in one another. I shall not wait till suspicion threatens me with a scandal, or even an insult."

"You want to accept, I see."

"Certainly, I want to make after to-morrow what I am not sure of making in ten years, if I refuse. I long to travel a little. One learns much, I think, by changing his latitude. Yet, as I do not wish to grieve you, I will refuse, if you wish it."

"No: I have no right to set myself against your future, and then —"

"Then what?"

"Nothing; I was talking to myself. Accept; go." She rose, took my head on her bosom, covered it with kisses and tears, then putting me away with an effort of high courage, "Go to-morrow," she said, "and without saying any thing to your sister who does not know, as I do, how to resist every thing. I will take care to make her see that you ought to accept."

"If my sister and you are going to be so grieved, I hesitate and am anxious. Are you going to think I'm about to expatriate myself? Have you hoped that I could settle near you?"

"No; we indulged in no illusions; but women always flatter themselves with the thought that a miracle will be wrought in their favor."

"Well, who knows that the miracle will not happen, sooner or later? Be sure, if Providence takes a hand in it, I will aid him with all my power. And then, if Jean-

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nie decides to love my dear Vianne, you will be happy enough to wait patiently for my return. How is their affair?"

"Ah, I don't know," answered my mother, with a sigh; "what can any one know about Jeannie? Go without saying any thing to her; that will be best, and go quickly, so that I shall not have time to be weak."

"Tell me, now," I said, the next morning, as I bade her good-by, "how happens it that you know Sir Richard Brudnel, and that he has not spoken of you to me?"

"Speak to him of Adèle Moessart, and he will probably remember; he has not known me since my marriage, or known the name of your father. Tell him — no, tell him nothing: it would remind him of painful things. Oh, yes! speak to him when occasion comes, never seeking to make one, of the Chateau Mauville; notice his answers, and send them to me; there's no need of haste, but the matter is not unimportant. What a strange event is the meeting of you two!"

"Come, explain your astonishment, and your reserve: the matter begins to trouble me."

"If it were my secret, I would tell you at once; but I must be silent."

"Does it concern my father?"

"Oh, not at all! no more does it concern you. Speak to him of the Château de Mauville: we shall see."

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II.

AT the end of the week, I was at Perpignan, and went to the hotel named on Sir Richard's card. He had gone out, but Mme. Brudnel received me with extravagant demonstrations of joy. "Dear doctor," she said, "you overwhelm me, and, for my part, I do more than thank you, — I bless you!" She remarked the somewhat cold surprise which this greeting occasioned me, and added: "Ah, you do not know — my husband cherished a dreadful notion. His other physician made him believe that something is the matter with his chest, — a mortal malady, and you have freed him from this fear, which would have killed him."

"I think you exaggerate a little. M. Brudnel has seemed to me much less anxious, and more philosophic than you represent him to be."

"Then you think, do you, that he is not diseased? Tell me the truth. I have great prudence: I will care for him without letting him know."

"I do not believe in the great prudence; but you will not have to exercise it. Sir Richard has nothing serious to apprehend, at present. The main thing will be to observe my prescriptions, and however tired you may be of travelling, you must endure it, if I think it necessary."

"I will go through fire, if you order it, doctor. Besides, I love travelling. Have I told you that I was sick of it?"

"You do not always remember what you have said, or you do not always think what you are saying."

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She looked at me intently, her gentle and wandering eyes assumed a penetrating brilliancy; then she said, with a burst of laughter: "How true it is, what you say! I often speak without suspecting what I say. I amuse Sir Richard so much with my absent-mindedness; he knows very well that it is not my fault, if I am a bit stupid."

I ought to have accepted this good-humored explanation. Why does she talk to me jestingly? Why did I think myself a fault-finder and a pedant? So little did I know it that I was not aware even of the unsuitableness of my criticisms.

"I do not approve," I said, "of making one's self so cheap. It is a trick that children often employ to secure immunity against the consequences of their impertinence."

"Children are children," she answered, gently.

"And do you want to remain a child all your life?"

"It is my destiny. It is not I who fixed it, and I must be content with it. If I had had foresight and reason, I would not have consented to be the companion of a man so superior to me. I have nothing but my youth and my face; since he is satisfied with so small a thing; he must have a noble heart; but I see that I seem foolish to you, who owe me no indulgence. Happily, his is inexhaustible, and you may make my incapacity conspicuous to him. It is all the same to me; he will only love me better."

I felt that I had been absurd, and that I was still absurd; for I could neither explain nor excuse the tone of my disagreeable remarks. I thought I could see that my logic was marred by a striking discord between the physical charm exhaled from this young woman, and the little trouble she took to please the mind. She seemed to me like a laughing, sportive odalisque, devoid of the faculty of reflection. I vowed never more to acknowledge that

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charm which seemed to have seized me when I found her so affable, so that I might no more be irritated by the want of tact and moderation.

From the first hour of our association, I saw that it would be very easy for me to keep my life apart from hers. Sir Richard arrived, and, pleased to see me, embraced me with paternal kindness; then we went out, and returned to dine together at the hotel. Madame Brudnel usually took her meals alone, and at other hours than the ordinary ones. After dinner we smoked a cigar, and talked an hour. Sir Richard took coffee, then, presently, a bottle of Bordeaux, which he sipped leisurely; but he never exceeded that limit, wishing, he said, to keep the mean between French customs and those of his own country. Precisely at one hour after dinner, having looked at his watch, he rose and went out. "Now," he said to me, "you are free. I ask you only to live always in the same house with us, — a room will always be retained for you, and to sit at table with me. When my wife wishes to join us, she will invite you herself. While we are in health, she and I, your time is your own; all of it that you bestow on us we shall regard as a proof of your good-will."

This arrangement suited me very well, only I felt some scruples about earning my salary so easily, and I thought I ought to speak of this. "Don't trouble yourself," said Sir Richard; "if you should leave me, I should fill your place as soon as I could, and I should not be as fortunate again. You see that I should save nothing in that way."

The next day we met at breakfast. The question of resuming the journey was raised, and Sir Richard asked my opinion. It was still warm, and he desired to pass the autumn in the Alps, and the winter in Italy. I saw no

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objection to the plan. We sailed from Port Vendres that same night for Gênes, whence we were to proceed to Lac-Majeur. I did not see Mme. Brudnel, Hélène, as her husband called her, till we were on board the steamboat, to which she had gone with her maid, a little in advance of us, to take possession of her cabin. She carried an enormous amount of luggage, the quantity of which did not in the least annoy her husband. She had, besides, two little dogs, a parrot, and a small ape, on which she bestowed as much care as children would have demanded, although a young negro had the special custody of him. An old English *valet de chambre*, phlegmatic, punctual, and taciturn, completed our *smala*.

As we were going on board, Sir Richard and myself, we saw Mme. Hélène high up on the step-ladder, waiting for us. She had removed her hat, and a black lace veil floated over her brown hair. The smoke of the steamer blew down upon her. I thought I saw Manuela Perez, as I had seen her embarking for Spain, and imagined that the resemblance was striking. But the Parisian accent dispelled the illusion. "You are very late," she said; "I was really afraid the steamer would start without you."

"I have never missed a departure," said Sir Richard, "especially in certain circumstances."

"When I am of the party, you mean, don't you? If we had started, you would have effected some miracle to overtake us, I know."

"Perhaps," he answered, with a rather constrained smile.

"Come and see my pretty cabin," she said, taking his arm, and he allowed her to lead him away.

He loved her tenderly; there was no doubt of that: but he had the English dignity in the fullest development, and

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"I must love some one."

"Indeed!"

"And I would love you, if you loved no one but me."

"Then you are of a jealous disposition?"

"Very jealous."

"Even toward your brother?"

"Especially toward my brother."

"They put very false and foolish notions into your head at the convent. A sister cannot be jealous of a brother; and, besides, you do not love me so much as that?"

"I love you passionately."

She said this so calmly, and with such perfect candor, that I could not help laughing. "And your bird," I said; "do you love him passionately too?"

"No; I feel passion only for you. Love is a foolish and wicked feeling when it is not legitimate and holy. The love one feels for one's relatives is pure and praiseworthy. I may, therefore, love you with all my heart, without sinning against God, and thus I do love you. But you, who prefer a bad religion, — you have not been taught that, and you love me very little."

"On the contrary, I love you very dearly."

"But not with all your heart?"

"I owe a good part of it to my father and mother, if you please."

"I permit that; but I will have no other sharers."

"You would not have me marry?"

"No, I will not have you; I forbid you. I should die of mortification if you did!"

"Don't die. I haven't the slightest desire to marry at present. When the notion takes me, you will have had time to become reasonable and to understand what life is,

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— about which, I see, you have only strange ideas. In my opinion, they gave you a bad education among the nuns; and you would do better to stay with your mother all the year round."

"I will stay with her."

"Is that settled? so much the better."

"I have just settled it, since you wish it."

"You mock me, while I am talking seriously to you."

She burst into tears, and I could not draw another word from her. I could not understand her; and I was frightened to see her so flighty. Was this a heart disturbed by doubt, or a reason disordered by mysticism?

I thought I ought to speak to my mother about her, and I was surprised that she seemed so little troubled. "Jeannie is like that," she said; "very singular, and always on one side of reality; though at bottom she may be kind and sincere. You do not understand her; for several years you have hardly been together: you study her and begin to be astonished. Don't be troubled, and always be kind to her; hers is a nature that you cannot persuade, but which you may always subdue by kindness. You cannot make her think like you, but affection will always lead her to do as you wish."

"Why, then, did you let her embrace Catholicism?"

"I had promised that it should be so."

"To whom did you make such a promise? To my father? He cares so little about it."

"Do you reproach me? I do not deserve it. But here come some travellers. Go to them at once."

Thus we were interrupted every minute, for my father had proved a true prophet. Everybody came to the Baths of Saint Sauveur, and our little establishment seemed to be prosperous. Yet I, who made the purchases, and kept

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it was easy to see that any thing like familiarity, even with his own wife, except in privacy, annoyed him. This accounted for the solicitude with which he kept her in seclusion. She lived on board as she had seemed to live at Luz and Perpignan; that is, like a Turkish woman, always shut up in her harem. She seemed to be contented with this retired life, for she never attempted to leave it without permission, and never took a step without him. He walked with her, occasionally, on the deck; but she was closely veiled.

I saw less of her at Marseilles, where we rested one day. At Lac-Majeur we were speedily established in a very pretty villa, where they had spent the last autumn, and where I had a pleasant room and a well-arranged study. From my apartment I could see nothing that passed in hers; a silken curtain shut in her balcony, and Sir Richard's was between us. Only I was surprised at the noise that proceeded from her room. Sometimes there were bursts of laughter from herself and the Spanish waiting-maid; sometimes an endless chattering, or shouts to separate the quarrelling ape and dogs; then sounds of a guitar, the rattle of castanets, as if they were dancing, and, above all, the parrot's sharp cries, which were redoubled when they tried to teach him to talk.

There was a beautiful garden, where I understood I was not to walk, because it was reserved for madame. Sir Richard himself did not enter it. The umbrella pines and vaulted alleys that shaded the garden mysteriously concealed it. By rare glimpses I sometimes saw the fair Hélène swinging in a hammock, kept in motion by the little negro, or playing with her pet animals. If she saw me at my window, she called out a friendly good-morning. Wearing a white cashmere dressing-gown, scarlet Turkish

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slippers, girdled with a silken scarf worked with gold, her hair hardly confined and falling continually in lustrous waves over her delicate shoulders, she was indeed charming. Never had I seen a woman more graceful in her attitudes and slightest movements, a natural grace of which she seemed to be unconscious. She looked better at a little distance, for seen close at hand she seemed a little faded, notwithstanding her striking look of youthfulness. I could scarcely take my eyes from this odalisque; and, though disapproving inwardly the Turkish amours of my Englishman, at times I envied his lot.

But this did not prove that I was in love with his consort. She seemed to me too null, too irresponsible in the life she led, to be loved otherwise than sensuously; and, as I was not a hermit, this would not have troubled me. Besides, she was not always so seducing. When she rode on horseback, mornings, with her husband, the scanty riding-habit which re-enforced the meagreness of her bust, the jockey-cap, whose chin-piece threw her facial angle into prominence, her awkwardness in handling her horse, her childish cries of fear, or her unrestrained and unreasonable laughter, — all these did not harmonize with her frail and listless type of beauty.

I lived at first quite alone. The country was fine. I was sufficiently occupied with the study of natural science to find much of interest in my excursions. I did not fail to visit the poor people who asked for my services, and whom I attended gratuitously. It was necessary for me to practise my profession and gain experience by observation. I was afraid I should forget my medical knowledge, living thus with my patron: his health continued so good. But I soon saw that I did not count for nothing in the material improvement of his health. I prescribed carefully every

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day the amount of exercise that he was to take. I watched over his diet, his dress, and his intellectual occupations, with close attention. I studied him, and taught him to study himself. He accompanied me in my walks; and, as he remembered that he was once strong and untiring, I was obliged to restrain him when he went too fast. He was fond of fencing, and begged me to practise with him. He was a very fine swordsman, but I was not unskilled, and he became much enamoured of the pastime. I used my authority to restrain him, seeing clearly that, in order to derive benefit from the exercise I permitted him, he must indulge in it prudently.

I had a full revelation of his character in this daily friendly strife. Beneath his bland and polished manner lay a nature ardent and irrepressible in its expansion. For a long time he had been at least twenty years younger than his age. Attacked by disease a few years ago, he had not been able to adopt the *rôle* of an invalid; he was incapable of the resignation he was vexed at needing. Infirm and shattered, he had been able to be silent and to smile; he was rapidly consuming in a dumb despair. I saw that his wife had judged him more wisely than I thought; and, taking to heart the mission I had accepted, I applied all my will, all the energy of my mind, to the work of curing him. I knew very well that his disease was believed to be incurable in theory; but I had known a case of cure, and thought, and I think still, that every disease can be cured, so long as there is a little oil in the lamp.

His amiable disposition and his gentle spirit helping me, I gave myself up to my patient like an artist to his work. He knew it; he saw that I was a devoted soul, and took me into cordial friendship. Very discreet at first, and leaving me much alone, as if fearful of engrossing me

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too much for his own advantage, he grew more confiding when he saw that his company was very agreeable to me. He had learning and wide literary acquaintance and a taste for art. He had seen much, having travelled extensively. He had also read a good deal, and his memory was strong. His conversation was charming and interesting; he was an excellent *raconteur*. Gradually we became inseparable in the hours that he did not devote to his Oriental household. He took an interest in my private studies, and became young again in our pursuits. In the evening, he taught me chess; in the morning, I gave him lessons in anatomy. During the day, we studied natural history together, — that inexhaustible subject, in which discoveries are continually made; and at the table we became literary. He was a Grecian, and knew the classics thoroughly.

We parted regularly at nine o'clock at night, to meet again at ten in the morning. At three, he retired to his own room, or to his wife's, where he remained till dinner time. On Sundays, I was invited by her, and she dined with us, talked very little, seemed pleasant, gracious, insignificant, and retired after coffee. Such was our life during the first weeks. But our relations, so clearly defined for that time, were modified by an unforeseen incident. Lady C——, an older sister of Sir Richard Brudnel, fell seriously ill at Nice, and he was obliged to join her with all haste. I expected to go with him; but he begged me to stay with his wife, and, for the first time, spoke to me about her; for he was so Oriental as never to pronounce her name in my presence, unless he was obliged to do so.

"Hélène" he said to me, "could not remain alone. As to all practical matters, she is like a child of three years. She would admit robbers to her chamber, if they had never

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so little skill in pretending to be beggars. She would innocently reply to all impertinent questions. In fact, I should find her, on my return, compromised or plundered. So I intrust you with the keys of the harem, for I am not unaware of the peculiar character of my household. Its peculiarity does not belong, in my case, to a system of government, as you might think; it is due to my knowledge of the adorably unique character of Hélène. I am not jealous, as you might suppose, — that is, I am not unjust and suspicious. Nor am I amorous, in the savage sense of possession; at my age, doctor, we love mainly with the heart, — paternally, — especially when we have longed in vain all our lives to be fathers. The character, tastes, and looks of Hélène lend themselves so fittingly to my fancy, that I could not hope to find a sweeter companion. That's enough on this subject; let us not recur to it: but let it be understood that you do not leave the house during my absence; that you are responsible to me for the health and safety of my companion."

"I can refuse you nothing," I answered, "even this test, so severe to a man of my age. Will Madame Brudnel acknowledge the authority with which you invest me, if any unforeseen circumstance should oblige me to exercise it?"

"All is arranged. She will obey you blindly. Only one thing would frighten her, — that is a demand for an exercise of the will, or a sentiment of independence."

"Yet we must think of every thing: if weariness on account of your absence suggests to her the thought of asking me to visit her, or of going out with me" —

"Don't go," he answered, sharply; "never go with her. Besides, she has promised never to go out without me; but go to see her when she wants you. I fear only one thing, —

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that she will not be willing to profit by your agreeable company."

"Must I not go out at all?"

"Go out as usual; but be here evenings and nights. Hélène is sometimes subject to accidents, rather serious nervous attacks. It is long since she had one; and I hope she will give you no trouble. Yet" —

"Be easy: I will watch over her. Shall you be absent long?"

"A week, at the most. My sister is with her family, and will not need my care, and we are united by the duties of relationship more than by harmony of feeling. She has summoned me, no doubt, for the purpose of intrusting to me some testamentary arrangement that will not require discussion."

He went to bid his wife good-by, and would not permit her to go with him to the place of embarkation. She would have had to return either alone or with me.

I accompanied Sir Richard, giving him all my professional orders; and then, as I found him in an expansive mood, and we had half an hour before the time of starting, I bethought me of what my mother had told me to do. I asked him if he remembered her. When I uttered the name of Adèle Moessart, he grew pale, but answered without hesitation: "Mlle. Adèle! the honest steward's daughter! Oh, very well, — a worthy person; perfect, one might say. Give her my respects. Say that I have not forgotten the Château de Mauville, and that I love you doubly now I know you to be her son. Why didn't you tell me this before?"

"My mother said that the recollection of that château might be painful to you. I am a physician first of all."

"Recollections might be roused that would be painful to me. Do you know about them?"

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"Oh, nothing at all! I am ignorant as to all that concerns you."

"I will enlighten you, perhaps, some day. Now I must go. Take good care of Hélène."

The last pressure of his hand seemed to say: "You love me: my happiness ought to be sacred to you." I did not need this admonition. Madame Hélène troubled neither my heart nor my fancy. Accustomed already to live near her, — as near some precious thing enclosed in a glass case, and of no use to me, — I had no fear, except that she would ask me to take her dogs to walk, — a daily duty that her husband religiously discharged.

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III.

RETURNING to the town, I found a letter from my sister which disturbed me at first. She wrote so seldom that I thought my mother must be sick. I was speedily reassured. This is what Jeannie wrote: —

"I intend this time to give you some news about myself. Mamma is very well. It is of myself that I have to speak. I know how you love M. Vianne, and how glad you would be to have him for a brother-in-law. Well, I have sent him home, but with permission to come back in a year, if at the end of that time he persists in his purpose. I have given him liberty to write to me every fortnight. Mamma is pleased. Are you delighted?

"For myself, I am a little frightened at the thought of having promised so much. They say love is a grand thing, — sublime or terrible. Whichever it may be, I have always imagined that the wife being called to obey, only a great love could render obedience agreeable or sacred. Now, I feel for M. Vianne only a very warm and sincere friendship. Mamma thinks that he will finally inspire me with a warmer sentiment, — meaning, no doubt, enthusiasm or tenderness. M. Vianne is very well qualified for calling out such fervor. He is in good health, well established, and very intelligent. What need has he of a companion like me? For my part, I need a worship, because I am neither so wise nor so tranquil. I have given myself to music. What relation could be established between music and marriage? I see none.

"Will you tell me, as you have often done, that one

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does not live by intellectual pleasure alone, and that an empty heart is a dead heart? But have I not two beings to love, and is not that enough? — my mother and yourself. Are not you enough to fill my heart and keep it alive? My mother loves me so much! If my power of loving should grow weak, she would revive it speedily by the fervor and exquisite delicacy of her affection. Why should my heart be deemed cold because I could not love beyond my family? We had so petted a childhood, and later so happy a life! You, too, are of the age to marry, and you scarcely think of it. You are bound to the life of that gentleman whose friendship makes you happy. Don't learn to love him better than us! But, no, I have no fear. You will never love any one more than us: I defy you to do it. She to whom you will belong can indeed give you the future; she will not give you the past, — that great fund and storehouse of love and confidence; the joys and sorrows shared so long together. As to me and M. Vianne, there is no past; and it does not seem to me that there can be a future without that. I am sometimes so frightened about this, that I *throw myself* upon my piano, to forget what I am, and what they wish me to be.

"I will keep my word, since I have promised. I will receive the letters, I will try to answer them, and at the end of the year I will see him; but if I have not changed, if the feeling has not come, if I am conscious of no joy in resigning my personality and freedom, will it be my fault? Shall I give ground for complaint? Will my mother be mortified? Will M. Vianne curse me? Will you scold me? I have not promised to say 'yes;' I have promised to do my best to say it: but if it were necessary to say it against my will, with terror in my soul, should I find in you a supporter, a devoted friend, a true brother, to pre-

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serve me from terror or despair? Answer me, I pray you!"

I replied at once: "Yes, I would be a supporter, a devoted friend, a true brother. Be free, my beloved! be free in the emotions of your soul, as you are in the inspirations of your art. Think without fear of the decision that you will make in a year. Your mother will accept every thing with her unchangeable and inexhaustible affection, with her lofty spirit of justice and truth. My friend Vianne will know how to resign himself without loss of the respect which he will always feel for you. As to your brother, he has consecrated his future to one end, — never to cost his mother a tear, and to prevent — so far as it may be within the power of a man — his sister Jeannie from ever shedding one."

I also wrote to my mother to repeat minutely the conversation I had had on her account with M. Brudnel. I took my letters to the post; I dined abroad, not wishing to have dinner served for me at the villa in the absence of the master; and I returned at sunset.

I was preparing to study; and thinking of my sister, — of this dread of the marriage, which there was no necessity for hastening, and of the strange ideas that she had long cherished about an imaginary secret as to her birth. I wondered if she still retained them; if she thought herself too noble to marry Vianne; and why my mother had wished to know the nature of Sir Richard's recollections of the Château de Mauville. In the rosy light which flooded my chamber with the reflections of the setting sun, my spirit was lost in vague, fantastic reveries. There had always been something mysterious around me, and my sister was the mysterious being *par excellence*. As she appeared no longer to doubt her legal identity, why had

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she doubted it? Sometimes, — and this was the vague reason of my delay in speaking to Sir Richard of my mother, — sometimes I was afraid to think of the relations which might have existed between her and him. But no; that was impossible! My mother was thrice a saint; the rectitude of her whole life shone in her words and her face.

I was about to light my lamp, when there was a knock at the door. I said, "Come in!" thinking the servant had come to turn down my bed. The door opened. Imagine my astonishment: it was Madame Hélène!

"Don't be surprised by my visit," she said; "and don't light the lamp. It is still light. Come and talk on the balcony. I've something to ask you, my good doctor!"

"Accept my arm!" I said; "and let us go to the *salon* to talk. You will be more comfortable there. I've been smoking too much here."

"Oh, that makes no difference to me! But go where you will."

I conducted her into the common room which was known in the house as the parlor. It was a large hall, decorated with statues, which hardly deserved that cosy name of the English home. Madame Brudnel threw herself on a sofa. I took a chair and waited for her to speak.

"You went with Sir Richard to the boat?" she asked, with the embarrassment of one who does not know how to enter upon a subject.

"Yes, madame, even to the boat."

"Did he get a good cabin?"

"Very good."

"And were you not worried at seeing him go away thus alone?"

"I see no reason for anxiety, as John is with him."

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"You love him well, do you not? He is so good!"

"Very good. I am wholly devoted to him."

"He loves you, also; he has full confidence in you."

This did not seem to be a question, and I did not answer it.

"Say!" she continued sharply. "He trusts you with all that concerns him."

"He has never made me any confidences."

"But he speaks to you of me?"

"Never."

"Ah, indeed, — how strange that is! Yet, to-day, for instance, he must have said something to you?"

I faithfully repeated Sir Richard's words, which surely were not confidential, and which he must have said a hundred times to her.

She seemed disappointed. "And is that all?" she asked: "will you swear it?"

"I can take my oath of it."

"Nothing about his sister, about her family affairs, of her intentions with reference to him, about certain contingencies. You know that we are not married, according to the English law."

"I know nothing about it."

"I'm going to explain to you" —

"No, no, I beg you will not: I do not wish to listen to confidences which M. Brudnel perhaps did not think it proper to make to me. If you have no orders to give me, permit me to wish you good-night."

"Wait; no, remain! I have spoken an imprudent word. Don't go and think that I am his mistress: he has given me his promise." And as I insisted upon lighting a candle and conducting her to her chamber, — "Listen!" she said, with sudden energy, "I need your respect and my

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own too. My position is too equivocal. Richard thinks that I do not mind it; he does not know that I am dying of it! This secret chokes me; you *must* know who I am."

"But this does not concern me," I answered, impatiently; "I do not care to know it."

"It is scorn, then! Ah, I see it clearly; see to what the mystery with which he surrounds me, condemns me, when the truth should be so opposite in the heart of a friend, of an honorable man like you. But you must hear me, or I shall think that in your eyes I am merely a kept-mistress, an adventuress."

"I will listen to you only on one condition,—that I may repeat every thing to Sir Richard."

She hesitated an instant. I was going to profit by her delay to beat a retreat. She took me by the arm with a quick movement in striking contrast with her usual indolence. "You will tell him every thing! I consent, I wish it. Sit down, come! I shall stand; I am so agitated: but I will tell every thing, and I shall breathe more freely. I am not what they say; I am not a Frenchwoman; my name is not Hélène; I am a Spaniard, and my name is Manuela Perez."

I don't know whether she saw in the darkness the shock I received full in my breast; but she was frightened to see me leap into the middle of the room, as if I had been bitten in the leg.

"What's the matter?" she said; "is some one listening?"

"That might be; this room is very large, and nothing can be seen in it."

"Come into my boudoir. There we can surely talk, and there is light there." She opened a door, and I followed her mechanically, like one stupefied by a fall.

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She opened the door of a small room, lighted by a lamp, and sat down. This time I preferred to stand, and she spoke as follows:—

"I was born in Paris, as I have told you. My mother was an honest but very poor woman, abandoned by a husband, whom I do not remember to have seen till I was ten years old. My mother came from Spain with this husband in my early childhood. She was still nursing me, when he went away, leaving her a little money which she husbanded, hoping always for his return. She was a good workwoman; but she could not go out by the day, on account of me, and a woman earns so little. She taught me her business of coloring engravings. She also taught me to read and write after a fashion. I never could learn how to spell. A little sewing, a little Spanish, a little dancing, and my prayers in Latin, that I never understood, — that's about all she knew. She never gave me a notion of good or evil. Honest and faithful to her husband, whom she loved, she knew not how to talk about morals. I think she shrank from thinking of them, for fear she should have to condemn her husband; by way of compensation, she watched me very carefully. I was very pure by force of circumstances, and not knowing that one could be otherwise. Yet our means were exhausted. Our earnings were insufficient; we were on the brink of extreme destitution, when my father sent us some money, and announced that he would soon return.

"Two years passed. At last my father came, and told us that he had made great gains, without saying how. He told us that we were to live near him, and took us to a frightful village called Panticosa in the mountains of Navarre. We find that my father is at the head of a community of smugglers. This discovery frightens my mother;

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but he laughs at her. He establishes us in a tolerably good house, provides us with two servants, and departs, God knows whither, to return from time to time, very busy and surrounded by men who looked like murderers and frightened us.

"We wanted for nothing, — not even fine dresses and jewelry; but for whom could we beautify ourselves in that desert? We didn't like the country, and this country was a cut-throat place. We were accustomed to our little Paris life, to our gay streets, to that continual tumult, to those moving figures. We missed our mansard, and all that striving, even the struggling to live, and that makes one think of nothing. At Panticosa we had bad dreams, incessant fright. These men with their smuggling, were always grim; they talked in low tones or by signs. I tried to be pleasant and free with them. They were not bad to me; but my mother was in continual fear that they would do me some hurt, and begged me not to leave her. She was attacked by a severe spleen, and fell ill.

"And then one day she discovered that my father had relations with other women, and jealousy made an end of her. One night my father returned from one of his expeditions and found her dead in my arms. He scarcely regretted her, did not think of consoling me, and three days later took me to Bordeaux, where he had business. He was accompanied by his servant Pepa, and took no pains to hide from me the nature of his connection with her. I was disgusted, and threatened to run away to escape from the authority of so hard-hearted a step-mother. Whither should I flee? I had no idea; I was angry, and did not reason.

"'Since you take it in this way,' said my father, 'I will put you away from me and shut you up in a convent,

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You'll be dismal there, but that's your lookout. You will have brought it on yourself. Especially as you are now rich, and must become a young lady, hasten to get knowledge; I will reclaim you when you have reached a marriageable age.'

"He took me on board a steamboat that very day. I had wept a good deal, and was afraid to look ugly; so I covered my face with my mantilla, and left Bordeaux without seeing any thing in it.

"We went to Pampeluna, where he left me. I was then sixteen. I was not sorry to enter a convent, since I no longer had my poor mother, the only being I had ever loved, and certainly did not regret the wretched life at Panticosa and the society of my father's concubine. I asked nothing better than to learn, and I thought myself no more stupid than others; but it was rather late to begin, and I learned only what my companions taught me by their example, — the art of dressing the head with the mantilla, of flirting with the eyes and fan, of chatting gossip, of thinking about coquetry, and talking about love, before they even knew what love is. Our nuns, knowing nothing themselves, taught us nothing.

"I will hasten my narrative in order not to weary you. Two years passed in this manner of living. I grow pretty; people look at me in the street when we go to walk; they notice me; they talk of me in the city, and send me billets. I become vain, but I love no one. I show the billets to my companions, and laugh with them; I laugh over them every day, and at night I think of them too much. My admirers seem to me ugly or ridiculous. I dream of a charming one, and I do not ask myself what I shall do if I meet him. This desire becomes so ardent that all reflection deserts me. I am all impatience to see him appear. I

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become feverish with it, — a fever which tints my cheeks and makes my eyes glow.

"At last he appears! He is a young officer, obscure, and not rich; but he is handsome and graceful, and his letters are passionate. He spends the night under my grated window; he is brave and hardy; he contrives to penetrate into the convent garden. He speaks to me in words of passion, he presses me in his arms, he intoxicates me, he dazzles me, and instantly he carries me away. He takes me to a woman whom I do not know, and whom he charges to hide me till we can safely leave the town.

"I am lost, am I not, lost by my own fault? Oh, it is quite true that there is no excuse for me, that no effort of reason or will preserved me, that I am as culpable as if I had yielded myself; but chance, a very sad chance, undertook to save me from irreparable ruin.

"Day broke just as we reached that house which I believed to be honorable and safe. My lover had to answer to a call to arms. He was forced to leave me. He would return in the evening. Worn out with fatigue and emotion, — I was still so young, — I threw myself on a sofa and went to sleep.

"Some hours passed. A voice — oh, a terrible voice! — aroused me, the voice of my father. He was talking near my chamber with the woman who was charged to hide me. She spoke to him like an intimate friend. She was a receiver of smuggled goods; she told him that at present she was in another business, quite as dangerous, but more lucrative; she received abducted girls. She spoke of me; did not know my name, who I was, or whence I came, but she praised my face, and inflamed his curiosity, — shall I say, his lust. Ah, why show him any consideration; he was an infamous creature. He wished

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to see me; she resisted; he pushed her away, broke open the door with one kick, and found me, almost lifeless, on my knees. He recognized me, slapped me, covered me with blows. He sent for a carriage, thrust me into it, and took me to Madrid.

"Thus far it was his right, perhaps his duty. Oh, you will see all presently. He tells me that he intends to place me in a very strict convent, which I shall never leave. I answer, to appease him, that I deserve such a fate, that I submit, and beg him to forgive me, as I am going to atone for my sins. He bursts into strange reproaches. He says I am of a cowardly and vile nature, because I loved a poor man when I might belong to a rich and powerful one. For my part, I do not understand, or fear to understand. I stop my ears and weep; I refuse to eat; I shut myself in a chamber of the inn.

"At night he returned with a horrible man, a kind of Kalmuck, with a red beard, and fox-eyes, and diamond buttons in his shirt and cuffs, and thus he spoke: 'There she is; she is not pretty just now: she is angry because I have prevented her ruining herself; but you have seen her at Pampeluna and you know what she is. Take her; I've had enough of her.' Then, turning toward me, he said: 'Follow the gentleman; he is a great and rich lord, who is seeking a companion for his sister, and will take you to her; you will be well treated, and will not have the trouble of going to a convent. Come, quick! take your mantilla, the carriage is waiting.'

"I had seen the Russian prowling around me at Pampeluna, and he had written me insulting letters. I understood that I was sold. I wanted to cry out; my voice was choked in my throat, and there was a terrible struggle to make me leave the room. They succeeded in getting

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me across the threshold, but then I escaped from them, and fled at random, longing to call for help, but utterly dumb, like an idiot. Seeing before me an open door, I dashed within, entering a room where an elderly man, with a pleasant face, held a paper that he was not reading, for the noise of our struggle had attracted his attention, and his eyes were raised toward me.

"I threw myself at his feet, and, clasping his knees with my arms, managed to say: Save me! Then I knew nothing more. I fainted.

"When I came to myself I was lying on a lounge, and a young man was holding a strong scent to my nose; the older man, who held me in his arms, said to him: "She is not so cold; she is reviving.'

This man was Sir Richard Brudnel; the physician was his own. When I had recovered my senses they left me, leaving a servant with me, telling me to have no fear of any one, and urging me to take some rest.

"I was worn out; but the fear of seeing my father come back kept me awake all night, while the watcher slept. He did not come. I have never seen him again. I know that he died of yellow-fever in America not long ago, leaving no fortune. So much the better: I should have wanted none of it.

"The physician came several times to see how I was, always telling me that I was in safety, and there was no need of trembling any more. In the morning, Sir Richard sent word that he wished to speak with me, if I were visible. I rose, arranged my dress, and received him. He dismissed the watcher, and said to me: 'Mademoiselle, are you really the daughter of M. Perez?'

"'Alas, yes!'

"'Is it true that you had a little adventure at Pampeluna?'

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"'It is only too true.' I told him the whole story, and he saw that I did not lie.

"'Do you intend to marry this young officer?'

"'Can you doubt it, sir?'

"'Then you are sure that he did not intend to deceive you?'

"'Ah, very sure.'

"'And you love him?'

"'I love him.'

"'Write to him to come to you here. Tell him your father forgives him and wishes you to marry at once; add that this is on the condition that he shall take you without any dowry: such is the will of M. Perez.'

"I wrote. M. Brudnel sent a messenger, enjoining him to put the letter into the officer's own hands and bring back his answer. The messenger came back empty-handed. The officer had received the letter, saying that he would answer it subsequently; that he was not at liberty to write at that minute.

"While I awaited the result of this effort of my benefactor, I did not see him. We were still at the hotel, occupying separate apartments. When he came to tell me of his failure, I wept bitterly. He saw that I was still too ill to bear the truth, and tried to leave me some hope. 'Probably,' he said, 'this young man is not free to dispose of himself without consulting his family. I will write to his parents. Where do they live, and what is their position?'

"I knew just nothing about them. I didn't know even how his name was spelled. Sir Richard raised his eyebrows slightly, and his smile of pity humiliated me deeply. 'Come,' he said, seeing my despair, 'you are more a child than I thought; but don't blush to death. Your folly

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proves that your father was right in thinking you incapable of understanding what he called *your interests*. Such a temptation and such imprudence are not the work of a corrupt person; and I do not count you criminal in the matter. Only'—

"'Only I am disgraced, am I not, by thus yielding myself to the loyalty of one whom I did not know.'

"'You are not disgraced; but you soon would be, if you did not change more suddenly still. You have received a detestable education.'

"'I have received none.'

"'Yes, that's the trouble; but the case is not irremediable. Would you like to have me render you able to reason, reflect, and comprehend?'

"'Oh, yes, yes, yes, I pray you do! But will my father permit it? If you knew!'

"'I know all; know that you have no other father than myself. He has ceded you to me.'

"'*Ceded?*'

"'Yes, *sold*,—at a high price,—and he has gone to America. I would not tell you things so harshly, if you had received an education; but I must speak roughly in order to arouse your dormant intelligence, and make a consciousness of human dignity spring up in you. Now understand: you belong to me; and if I were a libertine, see to what degradation your thoughtlessness would have brought you! M. Perez, whatever he may be, would not have dared to traffic with you so promptly and openly, if your *escapade* had not convinced him that you were bound to ruin yourself. For the present, dismiss your anxiety; if, as I believe, you are worth too much for that. I am an honorable man, and by no means in love with you; I have meant to do a good action. I am not a saint: perhaps I

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have some sins of my youth to expiate. The expiation is easy to me; I am rich. I will therefore treat you as my adopted daughter, if you show yourself worthy of such a favor. At first I wanted to marry you to him who has compromised you; and I intended to furnish you with means of subsistence. If I did not inform your abductor of this, it was because I wished to try him.'

"'Ah,' I cried, 'he is a wretch, a villain!'

"'Perhaps he is; perhaps he is not. It is better to believe that he is a thoughtless child, without principles, without knowledge of good and evil, yielding to instinct at the first impulse, — like you, my child. No doubt, he is without means, and is not anxious to taste poverty with a woman as poor as himself. The trial is made; yet it is not decisive. Who knows if he is not arranging to bring the answer himself? Let us give him a month, — two, if you will. But after that delay, you must have courage enough to give him up without any display of weakness.'

"We had not long to wait. Two days later, M. Brudnel received from this officer a letter whose contents I remember word for word: 'Sir, I was going to Madrid, intending to repair the wrong that I may have done to Mlle. Manuela. I expected to find her with her father; but I learn that he has gone, and that you have taken his place. This looks very suspicious; and for several reasons, which it were better not to write, but which you understand, I withdraw from the pursuit, and renounce the duty that I intended to perform.'

"'This,' said M. Brudnel to me, 'is the outrageous evasion of a man who means to cast the shame on you and me. Come, my poor child, are you cured of this ill-placed love?'

"'Surely,' I answer; 'but I shall never be cured of shame for my folly.'

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"'You must forget it, begin a new life, and again become worthy of an honorable man's love. I cannot care for you directly: my life is too irregular. Having no family, I am rather bored everywhere. Besides, you see, you would be suspected; and I did not save you to ruin you. I shall take you to France or England, and place you in a respectable family or a good school; and, by and by, if you behave well, I will make paternal provision for your settlement.'

"I fell at his knees to thank and bless him. He raised me instantly, kissed my forehead, and hurriedly withdrew.

"I had been so shaken that I was not in a condition to travel immediately. I had palpitation of the heart that choked me. The next week, however, we — M. Brudnel, his young physician, and myself — were on the way to France.

"This journey was made very delightful to me by the company of a man so good and amiable as M. Brudnel. I felt that I could trust him wholly. Then he was hardly fifty-five years old, and so well preserved that I never thought him forty-five. I loved him then without remembering that I had loved another the night before. That other I despised; the thought of him was hateful to me. How ardently I would have wished to wipe out my fault, so that I might be worthy of my benefactor's affection; but I saw clearly in M. Brudnel's reserve that a better title to his regard was needed, and I watched myself so carefully that he suspected nothing.

"He placed me in a boarding-school in Paris, where I passed the winter. I was very well treated, and I might have been happy; but I was too far behind the pupils of my own age. It was proposed to put me in the studies of little children. M. Brudnel, who came to see me every

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fortnight, understood my mortification, and how out of place I was among children of ten or twelve years. He looked into the matter, and decided that I should have masters who should give me lessons in the principal's room.

"I did my best at first; but he was informed by letter that I should not learn under that system. In the first place, I lacked the power of application. I was a wandering bird. I would have liked to renew my acquaintance with the Paris of my childhood that I loved so well. I did not go out, and the quarter in which the school was at that time was a desert of abandoned gardens and demolitions. My thoughts recurred incessantly to M. Brudnel, whom I wanted to see every hour, and whom I saw so seldom, — always in presence of the teachers, and more constrained than he had been while we were travelling. A profound weariness and secret despair took possession of me. I had been more free and more gay in my Spanish convent. There we danced the *bolero* clandestinely, we talked about love, we sang songs in low voices; there was but little discipline as to our habits. At Paris it was quite another thing. I don't know whether the girls talked of the pleasures of love. I lived almost exclusively alone or with the teachers, who were not lively, and who seemed to me to be prudes very discontented with their lot.

"My masters were neither handsome nor young, except the teacher of music, who was neither handsome nor ugly, but bright, enthusiastic, and a little sentimental. He fell in love with me, and permitted me to know it. I felt much disturbed, and fear turned my poor head. One day I was able to see M. Brudnel alone, and I begged him to send me to another school, or to let me travel with him. He scolded me a little, questioned me kindly, and I told him

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the truth. 'I feel myself in peril,' I said. 'I don't know what fever draws me to this musician. I swore I would be prudent and grow strong: I feel that I am not; that I cannot preserve my tranquillity when any one speaks to me of love.'

"'Yes, I see that,' answered M. Brudnel; 'the need of loving is consuming you. Yours is a passionate nature. Would you like to be married? I will make inquiries, and if this man whom you like is honorable'—

"'No,' I cried; 'I do not like him; I do not love him; I will not marry him. I love another.'

"'Who? That officer yet?'

"'No, no; another who cannot know it; whom I will never tell of it; but whom I shall love all my life!'

"'Very well,' replied Sir Richard, who, more penetrating than I had supposed, understood me; 'but what guaranty of fidelity will you bring to this other? Will you not be smitten by still another,—the first man who speaks to you of love? Come, you have too much affection for use on demand. I advise you never to promise any one to love him; for it is beyond your power to keep your word!'

"I deserved his reproaches, but his severity was not fitted to encourage my confessions; and he left me, saying that it rested with me to deliver myself from the importunities of the music master. If I succeeded in doing that without help, he would advise me.

"I wept bitterly; yet something comforted me. It seemed to me that there was more of jealous anger than real severity in M. Brudnel's demeanor. Perhaps he loved me; but if he did, why did he conceal his passion from me? He loved me earnestly, he thought of marrying me, since he wished me to be strong and loyal.

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"I took courage; I refused to take music lessons; I sent back the *billets-doux* unread. M. Brudnel was pleased with me; but he went to England, and left me in Paris, without appearing to suffer in the parting.

"I resigned myself. But the tedium of idleness, my vain efforts to profit by my lessons, affected my feeble health. When, the next winter, Sir Richard came to see me again, he found me suffering with anemia so severely, that he was anxious, and decided to have me travel a little with himself and his physician. He took me to Italy, where I soon regained my health. Then he spoke of placing me in a boarding-school, either at Milan or at Florence. I showed myself submissive, but I fell ill again; and one day, while asleep, I heard the physician say to him: 'You will not get rid of this pretty burden so easily. She will die if she is abandoned.'

"'Do you love her?' asked M. Brudnel, with singular abruptness.

"'I could love her well,' answered the other, very calmly, 'if — but as things are, I should guard myself against the passion as against a pest.'

"'Because' —

"'Because I am an honorable man, and I know your intentions. You wish her to marry, and I appreciate the loyalty of your adoption. Now, I would never marry any but a very timid, very cold, or very ugly woman. I should have little time, and still less taste, for keeping guard over *a treasure!*'

"I pretended to have heard nothing; but this severe lesson impressed me forcibly. M. Brudnel was so gentle and so good, that I had not realized what a trouble I must be to him, and how little I deserved the earnest affection with which I sometimes thought I had inspired him. The

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scorn of this doctor, who had always treated me like a stupid child, led me to self-examination, and to a serious desire to become a reasonable being. I saw, or thought I saw, that Sir Richard did not love me at all, as he seemed to propose that his physician should marry me. No doubt he wished to get rid of me. Slave of the duty he had undertaken, he would do his best to get me honorably married; but never would he propose that I should be his mistress. He must, therefore, to satisfy his conscience, render me worthy of being his wife. Then, perhaps, I might hope to inspire him with love. I concealed my chagrin, and begged to be placed in a convent, — no matter where.

"M. Brudnel fixed upon Venice, and took me thither. I attempted to feign a playful resignation; but my feebleness and pallor belied my resolution. Sir Richard took me in a gondola to the door of the convent, looking at me attentively, but seeming wholly resolved to separate from me.

"I bore the trial, without knowing that it was one. As I rose to step on shore, he held me back. 'It is enough,' he said; 'you have shown more reason and courage than I expected. I see that you can acquire power of will, and that your character begins to deserve respect. Let us remain at Venice; I will not leave you again.'

"I threw myself at his feet; I kissed his hand; I was intoxicated with joy. He seemed much moved, but, after a moment's agitation, gently repulsed me. 'It is necessary to repress exuberance,' he said, 'which might be misinterpreted if we were not concealed by the black curtain of this gondola.'

"'But as no one sees us,' I answered, 'ought I not to express to you my happiness and adore you for all you have done for me?'

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"'No,' he replied, 'there is no need of adoring me, since I cannot repay you with so exalted a sentiment, and you must become accustomed to the usages of modesty. I see plainly that beneath all this there is more innocence in you than one would think; but if I trusted too much to your good intentions and my own, I might forget the restraint that is placed on me, and it would be your fault. Learn to guard yourself against the dangers with which you seem to play. Struggle even against me, if I lose my self-control, for I declare if I had the misfortune to lead you astray, I should despise myself, and should leave you, never to return.'

"All this was very severe. I wanted to see in it only a purpose of raising me to himself, and I forced myself to meet his desire. I placed, so to speak, a shade over my eyes, and a cuirass over my heart. I became timid and reserved, as he wished, and I assumed in all respects the attitude of a submissive and tranquil young girl.

"I could see that my ignorance made him smile, and sometimes laugh. I tried still to inform myself, to learn English, history, and geography. We lived in a large fine old palace, where, as in other places, I had an apartment to myself and at a distance from his own. He went out a good deal, and allowed me to go only with him, with his physician, or with the lady's maid he had provided for me. She is the woman who is still with me. When Sir Richard came to see me, he insisted that she should always be present. Seeing that his resolution was fixed, I strove never to be alone with him, and he seemed to thank me for it.

"I had books, women teachers, a piano, dogs and birds to divert me. Nothing was wanting to instruct and amuse me; but I had a thick head and no memory. I learned

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very little and very ill, and of the things that I have retained there are many that I scarcely understand. I was rather artistic in my tastes. I have a good voice, and I am foolishly fond of dancing. Dolores taught me to dance, — an accomplishment in which she excelled; but musical science I did not learn. I sing agreeably, but I am not a musician. M. Brudnel saw that I was not intelligent. He could not reproach me for it; I could accomplish nothing, notwithstanding the pains I took. Our relations continued unchanged.

"I practised courage and patience. One day I learned from the servants, whom Dolores wheedled into talking, that he had an intrigue with a famous singer of Venice. I was violently mortified by this discovery; I resolved to die. I took poison that did not kill me, but made me so ill that I feel the effects of it still. I had made Dolores swear that she would not betray me; but the physician instantly saw the cause of my sickness, and Dolores had to confess all. She even confessed too much, for M. Brudnel was apprised of my passion for him. No doubt he had divined it, but he did not know it was so violent.

"When I was in a condition to listen to him: 'Manuelita,' he said to me in Spanish, for he could speak all languages very well, 'you wish me to love you, and I do. I love you dearly. You are gentle, good, sincere, docile; but my love has hitherto been that of a father, and you would make me forget my duty. Know that, since my youth, which was a turbulent one, I have imposed on myself, from pride and an invincible repugnance, the rule of never paying for love. I don't mean to say that I have not been attracted by women capable of, or accustomed to, speculation, but I never have paid them. They knew it beforehand; they accepted me because I pleased them.

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With you the situation is exceptional; I have paid for the right to be your father. If I had become your lover, I should have been guilty of a perjury and a cowardice of which I am incapable, and, as I told you, if I yielded, with you, to the delirium of a thoughtless passion, I should think myself no better than M. Antonio Perez, who ceded you to me without conditions. So I must be your father in all the sacredness of the title, or your husband. Have you thought of this? I am thrice your age. I am threatened with an incurable disease of the chest; moreover, I must not marry till after the death of an aged sister, who may yet outlive me. Family engagements in which my honor is involved render it impossible for me to evade this obligation. Reflect further. I may promise you marriage and never be able to keep my word. I do not wish to be, I will not be, your lover. Renounce, then, a childish dream, make a supreme effort to love another and forget me.'

"'Never!' I cried; 'I respect and adore you; I will be neither your wife, nor your mistress; I will conquer the love which would annoy or trouble you. I will be your daughter, blindly submissive and happy in that relationship. I blush for my forwardness, and I swear to you I will be quiet and resigned, even if you have ten mistresses before my eyes, even if you desire to marry one of them.'

"'Never!' he answered; 'she would drive you away. I swear to you now, that if I am ever in a situation to marry, it shall be with none but you; but will you then sacrifice your youth to such a contingency? Will you consume in the solitude in which I am compelled to make you live? Come; there is with me a very honorable young man, educated, and of good appearance, — M. Breton, my physician. At first he did not think much of

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you; now he judges you more wisely, and appreciates you. If in a certain time, having wholly renounced me, you feel any fancy for him, you need not hide it from me. I should be delighted.'

"'No, no,' I cried, 'he displeases me; all men displease me. Take me for your daughter, and treat me as severely, as coldly as you please; I shall be happy. I shall bless you for not putting me away from you.'

"He yielded every thing, reserving his liberty; but I soon found that he did not use it. He had dismissed the singer, for whom he had no serious liking. He lived in a very retired manner, caring for his health, which was not very good at that time, and devoting himself to an historical work on Venice. Gradually he permitted me to dine with him, and to pass the evening, — about two hours, in his apartments, with his physician, or some intimate friends to whom he introduced me as his adopted daughter. They were all elderly, or bound, like him, to celibacy for reasons unknown to me. M. Breton never said a word that could lead me to suppose that he thought of me. So Sir Richard no longer occupied himself with the idea of getting me married. Involuntarily he seemed to realize that he was attached to me, and that my company was necessary to him at certain times. He came to my room, and Dolores sometimes forgot to be there. He did not, or would not, notice it, and a sweet intimacy was at last established between us. He no longer feared to be alone with me; I had tamed him by my chaste trustfulness. The next year he took me to England, where he re-entered society, and provided lodgings for me in a quarter of the city distant from his own hotel. Every day he came and passed two hours with me. He was not jealous, yet he had me watched by John, his valet, who was placed at my orders.

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"He could assure himself of the austerity of my seclusion, and the innocence of my occupations. Several times he felt bound to say that there was but a faint prospect of our marriage, that his sister's health was better than his own, that he would warrant me my liberty, and that, if I wished to use it, I had only one word to say to prevent him from coming again. My dowry was always ready, for he had provided for my future, whatever might happen. I always answered that I wanted no dowry, nor husband, nor liberty; that I did not trouble myself about the future; that I should always be happy, if I could see him every day, were it only for a minute.

"My disinterestedness and affection softened him. He often kissed my hands, and sometimes my forehead; he called me his good girl, his child. Never, before God I swear it, never did he go beyond that with me. He had still love-affairs in his own world, I knew; but I overcame my anxiety and jealousy, since I did not lose my place in his heart.

"But let me rest that I may finish the sooner. In spite of myself I have gone more into detail than I meant to do; it is your expression, always mocking, that made me do so. Let us pause a minute, and you say what you now think of me. You look as if you did not believe me sincere."

I was quite troubled,—I could not have said why; I hesitated to answer; at last I said: "If you are sincere, I will be also. I studied you coolly (I lied, but did not think I was lying). Your story astonishes me much; it is improbable. Yet it is possible, the age, the illness, and, above all, the noble nature of Sir Richard being taken into account. If my expression was sometimes mocking, it was because I could not understand such revelations made to a man of whom you know nothing."

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"How?" she cried; "we have lived six months under the same roof. M. Brudnel speaks of you every day as his best friend, and should I not have need of your esteem when I remember that we have perhaps ten years, perhaps a whole life to pass together with him? I am sure that unless you leave him, he will never separate himself from you, and will do all that is humanly possible to keep you. So you must be my enemy or my friend; and, as you know nothing of me, I must make you acquainted with my misfortunes, my faults, and my virtues, if I have any."

Compelled to answer, I said: "Up to this time, I have not had a chance to be hostile to you; quite the contrary. Have the kindness to continue: I will resume my observations, if I have any to make."

Manuela Perez thus continued: "In the spring of that year, we were about to travel again, when Sir Richard fell seriously ill with a fluxion of the chest. He had so sternly forbidden me to go to him that I dared not disobey. I passed hours with Dolores at the door of his hotel, in the street, so that the physician could give me immediate tidings. One day the noble young man, touched by pity, allowed me to go in. 'He is very sick,' he said, 'and I do not want him to die without blessing you. If he regains consciousness for a moment, I am sure he will ask for you. So be near him; just now he is out of his senses.'

"Instantly I took Dolores's bonnet, called for an apron, and went in with M. Breton, as a nurse brought by him. These precautions were not useless. M. Brudnel's sister, crabbed and prudish, was in the room. M. Breton was convinced that she had interested motives, and that her presence was painful to the sick man. He persuaded her to withdraw, telling her that he still had hope. She had

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chosen for her brother a nurse devoted to herself, an ugly hag, always ready to get drunk. The physician removed her from office and authority, and put me in her place.

"I cared for my dear Richard with tender attention. I slept not a minute in fifteen days and fifteen nights. I was always there, with my ear ready to catch his breath, my heart dead or alive as his own grew feeble or strong. When he saw and knew me, he seemed happy, and with the first words he could utter he blessed and thanked me.

"He had hardly recovered when he wanted to leave London and return to Italy. After this illness, I became absolutely necessary to my friend. He no longer talked about my marrying another, and he often renewed the promise that I did not exact, to marry me whenever he was free. Our intimacy could not remain secret; and, as people are prone to trust to appearances rather than to satisfy themselves as to the fact, which, I admit, is not so easy, I passed for M. Brudnel's mistress. I acquiesced: I had accepted every thing for the love of him; but he could not bear to have me calumniated and scorned for my devotion. He let it be understood that we were married. It was not believed; for his sister had to be informed of the real state of the case, and she did not hesitate to say that I was a mere passing fancy: but at least, in our wandering life, and in the presence of those around us, I was spared contemptuous treatment. If the landlords who entertain us, the friends of Sir Richard whom we meet, and the domestics who serve us, are not convinced that we are man and wife, at least, when they hear me called Mme. Brudnel, they say among themselves that I am a decent companion, much respected by him.

"Now, you know my fate is about to be decided. Richard, in a time of misfortune, or some love trouble that

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he has not told me about, had need of a large sum of money that he did not possess; he was almost ruined, and his father was an obdurate miser. His own sister, who had married a rich husband, lent him the money on condition that he would not marry, in order that the paternal estate might go to his nephews, the sons of this sister. His father lived to the age of ninety, and Richard inherited the property only a few years ago. He then wished to repay the sister's loan and regain his freedom; but the agreement had been carelessly drawn. The terms of the contract provided that he never should marry, with no provision of possible repayment. The sister has positively refused to receive the money unless Sir Richard will make a will leaving all his property to his nephews. They came near going to law. Sir Richard did not wish to do so; he had always hoped that his sister would return to better feelings and more reasonable ideas. Now she is dying. Will her children inherit under that claim which she has so obstinately maintained? So he was obliged to leave me to arrange this matter. I have begged him to give up his heirship. What matters it what he shall leave me? Shall I not lose every thing in losing him? Am I ever concerned about riches? Is it certain that I shall survive him? It seems to me that when he dies I shall die. All I want is to be his legitimate companion, to possess, to know his love; I will say more, to know the love that I am yet ignorant of, since at the age of twenty-three years I can truly say I know not what it is. Don't laugh, doctor. There is no merit in my purity, I acknowledge, since I am virtuous by force of circumstances, and not of my own will. But here I am a virgin at the age when the passions are strong, and the heart speaks earnestly. You are still smiling! Then, it is settled: you do not mean to give me

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any esteem? At least, I think, you are compelled not to despise me, and I remain utterly indifferent to you."

"I told you," I answered, "that I might have some remarks to make. Shall I make them?"

"Certainly, I insist upon hearing them."

"Well, if M. Brudnel is in all respects worthy of the passion with which he has inspired you, I am not convinced that you have done all you might to inspire a like passion in him. Beyond question, you are amiable and gentle; certainly you deserve praise for conquering those instincts which hushed the voice of prudence and pride. Since you have been able to make this effort, the most difficult of all, why not have tried to form your mind so as to become, I do not say, equal to M. Brudnel, — he has a mind of the first order, — but his true companion, a friend sufficiently enlightened to understand every thing and to converse at any time with him? I have observed you but little; yet I have seen enough to convince me of your indolence, of your cowardice, I will dare to say, in the face of any sustained effort. You say you are feeble in mind and memory; sometimes you go so far as to call yourself unintelligent, and the worst of the matter is that you do not say this with shame or regret; you make a joke, a boast, a kind of bravado of it. That is in bad taste, I assure you. You seem to say to people: 'See, I am ignorant and narrow: but admire me just the same; I am so pretty! Love me; I am so seducing!' Well, in my opinion, when a woman glories in her intellectual inferiority, and falls back on her pride in her beauty, she cheapens herself. She takes a place among domestic animals: she becomes a charming bird, good to put in a cage. People are glad to keep her quiet there: they whistle a tune to her; they caress her as they pass; they see her

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hop gracefully; but they hurry on to more substantial amusements, and it seems to me, begging your pardon, that such and such will always be your affectional relations with M. Brudnel. You have wished to bind his life to yours; you have consented to every thing, even to real suffering. I am a physician; I see and I know that non-expansion must have been a cross to a nature like yours; and you think you have done enough to merit association with the life of a superior man. Well, no: you are deceived; it is too little. Sir Richard will never spend more than two hours per day with you, and even this will be a sacrifice on his part; for he is a man of experience and knows that there are women with whom a man can pursue a high range of thought, live with all his being, and never be forced to descend beneath himself."

Manuela mused sadly, and then she said: "You think he has known such women?"

"I suppose so, as he has often left you to go to them."

"Yes, but he has always left them to come to me. My gentleness and beauty, since you grant me nothing more, have then pleased him better than their great intelligence. As to you, I see that you rank yourself even higher than M. Brudnel, since you require at least a muse; without that, no love, not even friendship."

"Friendship? yes!" I answered, holding out my hand to her, with forced gayety, "one concedes that feeling sometimes to inferiors."

She burst out laughing, saying, without bitterness: "Yes, yes, one gives that to his dog. Richard loves me as I love my red parrot. Gracious goodness! what a savage, what a brute, what an original you are. You are far worse than M. Breton, who was content with calling

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me a frail treasure and a pretty burden. I see I never shall succeed with the doctors."

"Perhaps not: they are clear-sighted and practical men; but you will soon be consoled. A rich and noble Englishman is far more interesting to a pretty woman who wants to live in a silken hammock in a *capitonné* boudoir; stay, then, in your nest of down, fair bird of the tropics. For my part, I have to work; I offer you my respects as to the future Mme. Brudnel, and I do not thank you for confidences that I did not invite. Will it be necessary to tell your husband to hasten to initiate you into certain mysteries, the revelation of which you innocently declare you await with laudable impatience?"

"As you please," she answered, rather crossly.

I thought I saw a tear in her eyes; and I hurried out, involuntarily slamming the door behind me.

I was very much agitated; I did not want to listen to her, and pretended that I desired to study. But study was out of the question. I told myself that I needed sleep; I could not sleep. At last I grew calmer, and despite myself made an examination of my conscience. Why, then, when I recognized Manuela in Hélène, had I felt my disdain, my mistrust, my pedantic critical inclination in redoubled force, at sight of this inoffensive person: was I naturally a pedagogue? By no means: I was led to the examination, and it made me lenient, distrustful of myself, and tolerant toward others. Besides, this unfortunate daughter of Antonio Perez, whom I had believed to be soiled and lost, but whom I found so rehabilitated as to be on the eve of marrying M. Brudnel, ought I not to felicitate her, in my heart, and see in her an example of human perfectibility, or, at least, of her ductility under the beneficent breath of honor and charity? A good man had

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been able to bring into bloom again the conscience in a creature wholly instinctive, and sprung from an impure medium; and I was angry, was unwilling to believe in her conversion, mocked at her need of love, depreciated her intelligence, and was especially offended by her effort to conquer my esteem. Why was all this; why my hardness, my suspicion, perhaps, my injustice? Why a repulsion which was like an antipathy? Why a gloomy wrath, as if, in disposing of herself, she had torn from me some good that belonged to me? Is it possible that I could be jealous of her; that I still loved her?

Yes, indeed, it was very necessary that I should turn my eyes upon myself. I had loved her; I always loved her. She was my long-cherished ideal, my prey secretly disputed, my torment that I cursed in my pride; the hope and anguish of my youth; the scourge of my life; the rock of my honor, if I had not escaped from the charm which, not knowing me, and unconscious of it, she had cast upon me.

Sleeplessness magnifies temptations and dangers. As I counted the hours of the night, one after another, my agitation increased, and I resolved never again to see the promised wife of Sir Richard.

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PART THIRD.

I.

I SLEPT at last, and awoke in a calmer state of mind. Jeannie's letter lay open on my table. I wished to re-read it, to regain in its chaste and sweet sentiment assurance of my equanimity. One phrase had struck me; I wanted to understand it thoroughly: "I defy you," said my sister, "to love any one better than us; your wife will bring you only the future; while we — we are the past, the joy and sorrow shared together, — all the life one has lived."

"That is true, profoundly true," I said to myself; "and if Manuela moved me so powerfully yesterday, it is because she, too, is my past; but this is not what my sister speaks of, — this is not the holy affection, the anxiety, the daily expansion, the calm and sacred confidence: it is sleeplessness, curiosity, spite, disgust. I have passed through these torments; and I would begin again to attain — what? The future of this girl belongs to M. Brudnel; and what she has put into my past life is surely not worthy of regret. She has inoculated me with the disease of doubt; she has made me bitter, and, in fact, sceptical, about love at the happy age of illusions. Were she free to-day, I could not love her, except under grievous qualifications. Alas! without knowing it, Jeannie is right: I will believe no more; and, whatever it may be, the past

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of a woman shall be to me as an obstacle to faith or to safety."

Thinking of the angelic goodness of my mother and sister, I could see in Manuela only a shifting phantom; and my night of fever seemed to me simply the result of nervous irritation. I will go and study the natural history of the islands in the lake. This beautiful country, all aglow, with its violet bottoms, where the streams furrow the base of the mountain with silver reflections; that limpid depth, a shining mirror, that doubles the power of the sun; these green banks; these long mysterious murmurs of the little waves, — all this wooes to peacefulness.

When night came, before looking after my patron's frail treasure, I re-entered the house, and began to read, when the Spanish servant knocked at my door. I thought it was Manuela again. My door was locked. After asking, sharply, who was there, I opened it.

"Madame is suffering much," said the maid. "She will not have the doctor disturbed. She even forbade me to tell him; but I have responsibility, and can't let her get sick without notifying the physician, who is responsible like me."

"What is the matter with madame?" I asked, putting on my coat.

"She did not sleep last night."

"Bah! nor did I — the heat, the mosquitoes" —

"I don't know, sir; but she has not eaten all day."

"That's more serious; that's not like me."

"Has the doctor had a good appetite?"

"A ravenous one!"

"God be thanked!" cried Dolores, in a tone which seemed to mean, "What a brute you are!"

I mistrusted this Dolores. She did not seem frank.

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She was a tall, lean girl, who might have been pretty before she had the small-pox. Her age was problematical, between a soubrette's and a duenna's. She could, in case of need, be regarded as something of a governess. She called herself noble, in spite of many family misfortunes. She had, it is true, some education. She spoke French, Italian, and English quite well, but with an affectation which produced a false and fawning accent. I thought her a spy on Sir Richard and the whole household, either to curry favor with her mistress, or to while away with her gossip the long hours that they passed together.

I followed her: it was a duty I could not shirk, however slight might be the indisposition of her whom, in my thought, I still called the odalisque. Besides, I felt very strong and sure of myself at that moment. I found Manuela on the terrace of her apartment, quietly breathing the fresh air, and sipping a glass of citron-water. She was strangely dressed, — in a true Spanish costume, bright-red, with black lace, her neck free, and bare arms, with black guipure mittens, a half-length petticoat heavily flounced, her hair put back and filled with roses, and a fan in her her hand. One would have said she was going to a ball or a bull-fight.

"The illness is not serious," I said, as I entered, to Dolores, who opened the door for me.

Manuela uttered a little cry. "What do you wish, sir?" she asked, rising.

Her surprise and annoyance were not feigned. She did not expect me. Dolores had acted on her own responsibility. It was she who spoke, saying that she would not let me go to bed without feeling her mistress's pulse. And, as she began to speak of her responsibility and mine, Manuela, noticing my cool demeanor, suddenly grew calm, and stretched out her arm to me, saying, with a smile: —

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"Spare yourself this disagreeable task, doctor, for that it is one you need not tell me: but don't be troubled; I am quite well. You need have no anxiety about me."

"I shall if there is reason for it," I answered; "and, to begin, I say that you are feverish."

"Dolores does not tell you," answered Manuela, "that we have just been dancing a violent Arragonian *jota;* but my dress tells you."

"And you," said Dolores, — "you do not tell that at the very crisis of the dance you fainted."

"I didn't faint. I was dizzy for a minute: but I didn't lose consciousness; and the ice you brought at once restored me."

"But you have fever: the doctor knows it well. You neither slept last night, nor have eaten to-day. You are pale" —

"I am always pale. Come, leave me alone. Good-night, doctor. Go to your studies. I want to dance again."

"Forbid her, doctor!" cried Dolores, with an appealing voice. "You don't know what a spoiled child she is with me; she does not mind me."

I felt her pulse again. It was rapidly subsiding, and had even become feeble.

"What!" said Manuela, "you too! Are you going to play the tyrant to me?"

"No. Dance, if you wish; but not till you have eaten some soup: promise me that."

"I obey instantly; so much the more because I have had no appetite to-day, and there is no other reason for my giddiness. Go, Dolores, bring the soup!"

"I go; but stay here, doctor, lest she should faint again."

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"Are you subject to these faint spells?" I inquired, when we were alone.

"Yes," she said; "but just now I did not have one."

"I thought you enjoyed good health, as I have never been called to attend you?"

"I have good health," she answered curtly; "and if it were otherwise Sir Richard would not know it; so you would not know it, either. I don't see why Dolores, who has so often seen me overcome, should have summoned you for such a trifle."

I thought it my duty to question her closely. She answered me at last: "Well, yes; the life I lead is not agreeable to me; and if it lasts much longer it will kill me. Think of it, — to pass whole months without going out of one garden! To see, day after day, the same flowers; to pace up and down the same walks! How wearisome when Sir Richard is not here!"

"You ride on horseback with him quite often?"

"That really does me harm. I am afraid of a horse, — even of a donkey!"

"You are really so timid?"

"I have become so. As a child I was fearless; but since the terror I felt toward my father, — those scenes I have told you of, — and then the petting of Sir Richard! When one is too happy one becomes cowardly."

"Yet you brave something that is sometimes more terrible than a horse or a donkey. You brave disease, since you are often ill, and will permit nothing to be done for you."

"Yes, yes, doctor; Dolores is sufficient. When M. Brudnel is at home she does not worry as she does to-day. She knows very well that I don't wish him to learn that I am stifling in my cage."

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"Yet he must know it: it is my duty to tell him."

"I do not wish it."

"What of that?"

"Ah, we are on that footing! Well, what of it, indeed? We are going to be married, and my captivity will come to an end."

"Are you sure of this?"

"Yes, — and you?"

"For my part, I am not sure of it. M. Brudnel loves you like a child; but he does not seem to regard you as a grown person."

"Oh, I know that very well. But it is his fault. It is he who has shut me up in this manner, and prevented me from knowing any thing of real life. But, after all, what of that? If I am seriously ill I would rather not know it. Here is the prescribed soup. Give it to me, Dolores. I shall be better after I've eaten it!"

I saw her leisurely swallow the soup. She ate very gracefully and properly, but, as I had often noticed, without real appetite. I promised to prescribe for her, and took my leave. Scarcely had I crossed the threshold when the sharp clatter of the castanets made me turn my head. She stood erect in a superb *pose*, her right elbow raised to the height of her face, her arm rounded as much with muscles as with nerves, and the right hand approaching the left, whose arm formed a proud and graceful angle on a level with the shoulder. The castanets rolled like thunder in her nimble little fingers. Her neck and face, turned to the right, had an expression of extraordinary nobleness; while her eyes, at once fiery and stern, seemed to say: "On your knees at my feet!"

I stopped involuntarily. I never could have believed that this delicate little woman, so awkward on horseback,

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had such a shape, such suppleness and majesty, in the dance. Every country has its grace: the English lady is a horsewoman; Spanish Manuela was the ideal type of the bird as it flies.

She saw that I was surprised and fascinated. She was not a coquette, but she knew how to be, when she wished to please. "See us dance!" she said to me, making a sign to Dolores. "You never saw this dance; it is odd, and quite unlike your dances."

Why did I linger? I know not; but it was an error.

Dolores had touched the bell. The little negro entered immediately; and, without speaking, took a guitar which lay on a chair, and began to play the *jota*. Dolores quickly passed through her fingers the silk cords of a pair of ivory castanets. Manuela's were ebony, and made less noise. The little negro played furiously. The shrill tones of the instrument thus handled, and the maddening roar of the castanets, affected the nerves. In a moment the two women were as if demented. Manuela hovered like a dove, or writhed like an adder; Dolores, still more excitable, was transfigured. Her angular shape, her long body, her somewhat blood-shot eyes, her whole person, seemed to be melting in a new mould. She had thighs of steel, and leaped like a panther. At first ludicrous, she became beautiful. Her small black eyes darted ruddy sparks, and her fire called out the voluptuous look and languorous allurements of her partner. Truly it was a fine dance, a seducing pair, a rhythm to drive one mad!

The dance ended, the negro vanished as if the wall had juggled him away. Dolores threw a shawl over her shoulders, and Manuela enveloped herself with swift flights of her fan, and said to me, laughing: "Well,

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doctor, don't you think that's a fine remedy for the spleen of seclusion?"

I was embarrassed, — troubled. I asked if M. Brudnel, who was something of a physician, approved this exercise.

"He does not object to it," said Manuela.

"And he enjoys seeing your fine *poses?*"

"No, we do not dance in his presence. He is too English; he would be quite scandalized."

I concluded that Sir Richard thought such a spectacle too stirring for a man who repelled sensual excitement, and I reproached myself for having braved it. Manuela certainly remarked my confusion. I began to praise Dolores in extravagant terms; saying that the dance was very beautiful, but demanded a degree of vigor which only the duenna seemed to possess.

"You mean, then," responded Manuela, "that Dolores dances better than I do?"

"Much better, I am bound to declare."

"It is not surprising: I am well aware of it," said Manuela, without any appearance of ill-temper. "She is the teacher; I am only the pupil. Hers is the classic, the true dance."

"It should be said, too," observed Dolores, "that you do not abandon yourself to the dance when a man is looking on. You dance ten times better when we are alone."

I saw that they wanted to begin again, so I stole away; but I studied no better than on the previous evening. I was forced to admit the oppression that I felt. I determined to treat it as a disease, whose symptoms I ought to study. Every thing made this one of my most serious duties. Manuela loved no one in the world save Sir Richard. However Sir Richard loved his adopted daughter (I no longer thought that it was with passion): he intrusted

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her to my honor. I could not flee from her instantly, for I had vowed to watch over her close at hand. I had, then, to endure the pain of my position, — to live on spite suppressed, jealousy surmounted, temptations overcome. All this could not last more than a week. One must be very weak and very cowardly, I thought, who could not suffer eight days. And what matter if I did suffer, so long as I did not betray myself?

I was not concerned as to that; pride is a strong armor in default of virtue. I could betray myself only by making myself odious and ridiculous. I renounced, henceforth, the silly spite which made me seem odd. It was not necessary to be odd: oddity is masculine coquetry. I resolved to be friendly, devoted, disinterested, without seeming to make an effort to be so. The next morning I resolved to ask Dolores for news of her mistress. She came herself to tell me.

"She is not asleep," she told me, "and she has not slept. She is ill, I tell you, doctor, — perhaps seriously. I don't know; but I am anxious when the master is not here. Do you blame me for my solicitude?"

"Why should I blame you?"

"Ah, you sometimes have so strange a manner."

"I?"

"Yes, indeed; don't be annoyed. One would think sometimes that you hated my poor mistress."

"That would be strange, indeed, to hate one of whom I know so little, and who is beloved by M. Brudnel."

"Perhaps that is the reason," said the duenna, with a wicked smile.

"What!" said I, frowning, and looking at her full in the face.

She was disconcerted. "Excuse a foreigner," she re-

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plied in a honeyed voice; "I may speak words whose meaning I don't understand."

"On the contrary, you speak French very well, mademoiselle."

"You are very kind, doctor; but you said you didn't know my mistress. That might have been ten days ago; now you know her very well. She has told you her whole story, she informed me. I blamed her for doing it. There was no need of telling you all that. But now you know it, and you understand as well I do why she is ill."

"I do not really know if she is ill. I think she eats too little and dances too much. It is your duty to establish something near an equilibrium between the revenue and the expenditure."

"She dances too much, poor soul! And how would you have her employ the strength of her beautiful body? With what shall she hush the voice of her heart famished for love?"

"Those are fine words, señora; but I can have no opinion without an examination; and as Mme. Brudnel refuses to permit that, I think I ought to wait for her husband's return."

"Her husband! You know very well that he is neither her husband nor her lover! You are a physician, and you cannot refuse a consultation."

"I haven't been asked for one."

"Very true. This morning she refuses no longer."

"In that case, say to madame that I await her orders."

Dolores saw that I distrusted her. She went out, and returned in a moment with this note from Manuela: "A request to the doctor to come and see me."

I laid away the note, that I might show it in case of need to Sir Richard. I know not just what I feared on the duenna's part.

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I found Manuela paler than usual, wrapped in her white cashmere *peignoir*, her hair scarcely confined. She was, indeed, seducing, with her subdued air, and her languorous eyes.

I abandoned myself resolutely to the perils of auscultation. The physician saved the young man. I was attentive and clear-headed, and ascertained that there was an apparent beginning of hypertrophy of the heart. I forbade dancing, arranged a regimen, and withdrew, saying that it was nothing of importance, but that, nevertheless, my directions should be heeded.

An hour later Dolores came to my apartments. "Now, doctor," she said, "is it really true that it is nothing?"

"It is necessary always to tell the patient that it is nothing. But since I have prohibited dancing, it is because it is something. I hold you responsible for the observance of my orders."

"Oh, be easy, doctor! I'll see to that. Besides, she is wholly submissive: she will dance no more. But what shall she do to divert and rouse herself a little? If we could drive out in a carriage."

"M. Brudnel ought to have given you orders as to that."

"He left all his instructions with you."

"My instructions were nothing but a request to be always at the service of madame in all that concerns my profession, and a prohibition to go out with her."

"You are not enjoined to prevent her from going out without you?"

"I would not have accepted the post of jailer."

"In that case — but no; she would not wish to disobey him."

"Let her write to him: he is not far away. I'm going

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to write to him the result of my examination. The permission will arrive in two days; but I assure you it would be better to wait a few days longer, and avoid troubling M. Brudnel. The disease is not so serious that there would be danger in delay."

"Yes, because you think that M. Brudnel" —

"Well?"

"I can say no more."

"Then say nothing."

She went out as if angry, and soon returned. "I will say it all," she cried. "You must save my dear mistress. You must persuade M. Brudnel to tell her the truth."

"What truth?"

"That he will not marry her, — he never will marry her."

"He has not, then, really promised?"

"Not so really as Manuela thinks. Any way, he has promised, in spite of himself, in moments of tenderness and pity. In truth, he is not in love with Manuela: he never was. Yet he was sometimes affected in her presence at first: she was so pretty, and she loved him so much. But these English! — there you have a head of iron! He vowed when he saved her from her father, never to love her too much: he has kept his word. Yet something has happened which he had not foreseen, — that she should be so faithful and devoted as to accustom him to her cares and her amiable character, so that he could not get along without her friendship; but her love, — he fears it; he flees from it; and he would like to be able to extinguish it. Marriage would compel him to respond to it. Well, for a girl who has waited so long, a man of M. Brudnel's age, accustomed, moreover, to regard her as his daughter — no, he would think he was committing incest. And then, still

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another reason: if he makes his sister accept the reimbursement that you know about, he will, perhaps, be embarrassed; and, with a wife used to live like a sultana, — that is, to be only an expense and a do-nothing in the household — you see there are very many reasons. Besides, whether he marries her or not, he will never consent that Manuela shall be free to go and come like other women. He does not trust her. He thinks she owes her virtue only to the seclusion in which he has kept her. He thinks she has a weak head, a yielding heart, passions" —

"And perhaps he is not mistaken?"

"He is not mistaken, if she is to be the wife of an old man. Otherwise he is. Manuela has more strength and worth than he thinks."

"That is possible, but all this does not concern me. Since M. Brudnel has not intrusted me with his confidence, I have no right to advise, and you should have spared me revelations which delicacy will compel me to make known to him, if he questions me."

"Tell him all!" cried Dolores. "If I had dared, I would have spoken to him a long time ago, as I speak to you; for, I see plainly, the lot of Manuela must be changed, or she will die."

Thereupon Dolores made a dramatic exit, and I remained very much embarrassed by my part. It was very delicate, and complicated with a personal interest which I could no longer ignore. Dolores, with cynicism concealed under her natural manner of speech, had put her finger on the sore of the projected marriage. The promised wife had waited too long not to be near an explosion; the promised husband had so thoroughly resisted the perils of intimacy as not to have the passion requisite for so unequal a union.

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II.

IN the evening I was sent for again. I found Manuela not so well as in the morning, and the next day she was still worse. The symptoms, though not alarming, were more distinct. I had to see her again during the day, and in the evening I decided to write to M. Brudnel.

He had just written to Manuela under cover to me: "My sister died, accepting the repayment of the exact sum that she lent me. To satisfy the heirs as soon as possible, I must go to Bordeaux immediately after the funeral, that is to say, to-morrow evening. I hope to be with you in eight or ten days. Patience, my dear girl, your Richard blesses you."

This short letter Manuela at once showed to me. "What do you think of it?" she asked.

"I think it is non-committal, and I see nothing in it which confirms the engagement with yourself."

"There has never been a formal engagement, and Sir Richard never wrote in other terms."

"What do you mean by formal engagement?"

"A written promise. I have never asked for one."

"And that is where you were wrong," said Dolores; "the wind carries away words."

"You want to make me doubt him. Come, doctor, you who know him so well, and love him so much" —

"I can have no opinion, not knowing whether his words have been so explicit as you were pleased to think them."

"Good heavens! I know nothing more! He said he

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would never marry any one but me. Oh, I'm sure of that: he swore it."

"He will keep his word; but it is not a promise to marry you."

"I admit it. Yet he permitted me to bear his name and to pass for his wife."

"He permitted it because he could not do otherwise," remarked Dolores. "Remember how it came about. It was I who first began to call you madame, and to tell the servants that you were married to him. My birth and my principles did not allow me to serve a person unworthy of respect. You were pure: I knew that; but no one would have believed it. M. Brudnel was absent just then. When he returned, the mischief was done. He scolded me for not having made you pass as his daughter. It was too late to change what was done. He took the part I had assigned him, but I do not think that that bound him to confirm it by a marriage."

"There!" cried Manuela, "she would drive me to despair, you see! And she makes me more ill, she who pretends to love me more than all the world!"

"Will you," I said to her, "will you be really in despair if you remain with Sir Richard in the privileged conditions in which you have been these five or six years? What do you lack? Nothing, not even consideration, since he has suffered you to usurp the title of wife. You are bored, you suffer from too strict seclusion: the question is to have him let you go out oftener and drive you in a carriage, instead of accompanying you on horseback. This does not seem very difficult; and, when he sees you suffering, he will hasten to satisfy you."

"Surely," said Dolores; "he is a very good man, and he feels a deep tenderness for you; but do you call these

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walks pleasure and the blessings of freedom? Can one live for ever shut up with a man who no longer has the needs and the tastes of youth? No conversations, no visits, no theatres or balls! Say, doctor, if you had a wife, would you keep her tied to you in this way?"

"If I had a mistress, perhaps I should. If a wife, I would require her to devote her attention to her household and her children, which means that I never will take for a wife a woman to whose welfare conversations, visits, theatres, and balls are indispensable."

"Well," answered Dolores, "you would be right, because you would have a home and children; your wife would have something to occupy herself with, and she would have you, besides! A young and handsome man,—a woman is not melancholy, is not ill, with such a companion, while"—

"Enough," said Manuela, who had grown red as fire, in a tremulous voice. "Be still, Dolores, you say nothing but foolishness and impertinence!"

"All this is quite foreign to my professional duties," I remarked. "Speak of your health."

"My health!" she cried; "no, I shan't trouble myself about it. I want to be permitted to die: I've lived long enough"—and as I was going to chide her—"Stop!" she said, vehemently. "I see too clearly now. Richard thinks, perhaps, that I am aiming at his rank and fortune. And you, I believe, you think so too. Ah, miserable me! I loved him for himself, for his moral worth, for his large mind; for his goodness, which is vast; for his benevolence, which I have abused; but, above all, for the true and profound affection with which I thought I had succeeded in inspiring him. You open my eyes, cruel as you are! he thinks me not yet worthy of him: he wishes to prolong the trial indefinitely, till it kills me! Ah, well, be it so! I

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shall die pure, and he will regret me; while, if I importune him, he will take me in scorn and disgust. Be still, Dolores, I forbid you even to speak to me of him. Leave me, doctor: I don't wish to talk about my health; I mean to remain a slave, a prisoner, a child of luxury in my silken hammock and my gorgeous *boudoir* as you called it. Do I deserve any thing else, — I, who have neither intelligence, nor patience, nor knowledge, — I, with whom a man of intellect cannot converse, — I, who ruined my life the day when I loved, not knowing whither love led? Can I be pardoned for that? I let myself be borne away and dragged into the most ignoble perils: I did not comprehend; I was stupid. I thought I was walking to the altar, and I was thrust into a bagnio! What matters it that I came out as I went in? Not to have known is inexcusable. Ladies of quality know every thing, it seems; as for me, I was disgraced before I knew any thing! And for this, despite a long expiation, I am punished even to death!"

Sobs choked her; Dolores took her in her arms, and, with a man's strength, placed her on the bed; then she went out to get a sedative, and I remained with Manuela.

It would be impossible to remember what I was able to say to console and encourage her. I was too much agitated to take account of it. I thought that I had ruled in her favor against M. Brudnel, and induced her to break a bond which must be fatal to both. In spite of myself, I accepted the ideas advanced by Dolores; I would not believe that Richard was resolved to bring to fruition the hopes that he had implanted in her. I did not hesitate to break the pleaded engagement; to point out a simpler and truer future; to free her, in fine, from a yoke easy in seeming, but cruel in reality.

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Did she listen to me? Did she understand me? I know not. She wept, with her hands in mine, her eyes dropped, and veiled by their long lashes, with burning cheeks and laboring bosom.

I gave her the draught, and, finding her better, was about to withdraw. "Don't leave her," said Dolores; "you see that I annoy and irritate her; your presence and your words do her good. Stay a little: it is your duty."

I was base enough to remain, even after madame, under the influence of the potion, had fallen asleep. I took a book, and pretended to read it, while Dolores went out on tiptoe.

The purpose of this woman was plain: she wished to *join our fates.* But what did she mean by that? Would she have me betray the confidence of Sir Richard, and enjoy the rights of love, while leaving to him the responsibilities of marriage? Had she detected my agitation? Did she really believe that Sir Richard would not himself marry, and would be delighted to have me marry his adopted daughter? Was she a well-meaning, romantic woman, or a corrupt intriguer?

But Manuela herself, was she the sincere and unselfish being whose future could touch my sympathies? Was she not the well-trained accomplice of her duenna? Did she not aspire to be either the rich and honored wife of M. Brudnel, or, at least, his adopted daughter, sumptuously coddled, with a discreet lover installed in the house?

The book fell on my knees, and my eyes incontinently fixed themselves on that young sleeper who seemed indifferent to all the things of this world. The deep slumber was not feigned. Opium had done its work. She lay in the easy *pose* of a child overcome with weariness. There was no affected modesty: the *peignoir* was fastened at the sides;

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with her shoulder exposed, and her arm stretched out, she was the image of unconscious chastity, and excited in me at that moment no passion that was not easily mastered. I scrutinized closely the lines of her face, which were not yet familiar to me, her brow, narrow as that of a Greek statue, indicating impulsiveness rather than reflectiveness; her cheek, colorless, but pure and velvety; her motionless eyebrows; her lids reddened by real tears; her bosom, virginal indeed; her supple hands, badges of gentleness; her lissome fingers; her expression, the calm index of an unselfish and uncalculating soul. No, this was neither an intriguing nor an ambitious woman. She was all sincerity; and if the feverish longing for love had consumed the first flower of her beauty, it was unknown to, or despite of, herself.

I gazed at her with the interest of a physiologist. Her quiet heart no longer lifted in its pulsings the light fabric of her robe. Was she suffering from a severe pain? No: the nerves alone were seriously affected, and there was danger of an interruption of the equilibrium. Love was wanting for this tender soul, happiness for this cramped organism. But then Sir Richard, who had had opportunity to know her qualities and admire her devotion, ought to love her passionately and guard her tenderly. He ought to have foreseen this. Why did he leave her alone, intrusted to the care of a man of my age? Did he think me very cold or very strong?

At the end of an hour Manuela awoke. We were still alone. I wanted to call Dolores; Dolores had gone out. Manuela looked at me with vague surprise. For some minutes she did not remember why I was there, and was unwilling to ask me. I saw that she tried to remember without help. It was, moreover, the hour of her siesta.

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The room, large, dark, and cool, disposed to drowsiness. The scent of the garden roses penetrated the closed windows, with the shrill voices of the locusts.

"There!" said Manuela, when her torpor had passed, 'I feel quite well. Is Dolores here?"

"She has gone out."

"Ah, yes: I gave her some errands to do; but I don't need her. I want to get up, doctor. I'm all dressed; only give me your hand. I'm still a little dizzy, for I know very well that you gave me opium."

I led her to a seat. "Stay with me," she said; "I am in your care to-day for the last time."

"What do you mean? Still the threat of dying?"

"No; that's over: I was a fool. Behold me quite calm, quite reasonable. Don't think of all that stuff that Dolores said. I need neither balls, nor theatres, nor conversations. I understand that I cannot marry Sir Richard, and I give him up."

"Very easily, I think. An hour ago you were in despair."

"I was a coward, but I am not always a coward. Understand more clearly my novel situation. I am not in love with Sir Richard, as you seem to think. I love him, — oh, yes, I love him as my father, if he wishes to be my father, as my husband, if he would have me for his wife; that is to say, such affection as he demands of me I will give him without regretting too much that which he does not exact of me."

"You are sure you will not regret it?"

"I am sure of reaching that point after a little. I am not strong, but I am gentle: I always submit. Now I am used to so doing, and it costs me less and less."

"And you think you will not be ill when your lot is decided?"

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"I hope not; and, besides, what matters it if I suffer a little, more or less? One gets accustomed to duty. Mine is to Richard, to make him happy, as he shall understand happiness."

"Even to be his mistress, if he wishes it?"

"No, he will not wish it. If he were selfish, one minute, he would not be himself."

"Yet if he demanded it?"

"Then I know not; but the very day when he would dishonor me, after having respected me so much, I should die of shame and mortification."

"You have not always thought thus."

"I confess it; but now, when I understand so many things that I didn't dream of" —

"Now you would blush, you would weep, perhaps; but you would yield?"

"Good heavens! Why all these questions? What do you mean?"

"Nothing, truly; the physician questions you to learn if you risk a severe illness by lack or excess of courage."

"Very well. Now, doctor, I will ask your advice."

"You are very good," I answered, with a bitter smile.

She looked at me with unfeigned astonishment.

I felt that I was wrong, and instantly changed my tone.

"If I give you advice," I continued, "you will not follow it."

She insisted, and impatience seized me again and ruled me. "It is strange," I said, "that a woman should ask advice in such a case. It seems to me that her own sense of dignity ought to be sufficient to guide her; but you have made it a duty and a virtue always to place yourself beyond the case, without thinking of making the most legitimate

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and necessary reserves. It is embarrassing to give advice to one who thus abandons herself when passion fires her diseased imagination."

The poor girl did not try to defend herself. On the contrary, she decided in my favor. "It is true," she said, "that there is no merit in my virtue, since I would have freely sacrificed it, if he had demanded it, and even now — I feel no strength against him. My only protection is his honor. What would you? It is not so much imagination as you say: it is gratitude, a filial sentiment" —

"Oh, don't profane that word," I cried; "a filial sentiment is not a bestial one."

Jealousy consumed me. My violence frightened her. She looked at me with an expression of stupefaction that troubled me so much that I did not hear Dolores come in. To be sure, she entered without the slightest noise, and remained motionless near the door. Manuela's astonishment aggravated my annoyance. Her innocence affected me like an incurable immorality. But why did I wish her to be moral, — I whose desires could be only sinful? Apparently, because I no longer hoped to conquer them, and desired to find in her the strength that had deserted me.

"Stop," said I, spitefully; "the instinct of self-respect is lacking in you. M. Brudnel will not take advantage of this infirmity; but let him not hope to marry you to a man who knows your deficiency! What matters it to you, after all? You will readily meet some fellow without money or delicacy, who will be glad to handle a handsome dowry and to possess a pretty wife. You will not detect his baseness, and perhaps you will be very happy too. There are destinies logical with themselves, — *dénouements* naturally brought about by the force of circumstances. Good advice and the indignation of honorable men avail not to change them."

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Thereupon I went out, feeling that I had betrayed myself, and met Dolores face to face. I thought she was going to stop me, and prepared to thrust her out of my way; but she stepped aside, fixing on me a look of mocking inquiry, which comprised also a smile of satisfaction.

I am lost, I thought, as I re-entered my room, unless I have succeeded in mortally offending the odalisque, in which case her hatred will save me from my folly. I thought I had attained this end; for, during three days, not only did I not see her, but Dolores did not come to me. I sent to inquire about madame. The little negro came to say that madame thanked me, and she was very well. I scarcely believed this, for I noticed that the garden was closed and silent. No more laughter, no more castanets. One might have thought that the dogs and the parrots had become dumb. I was not free from remorse. I had dealt ill by my patient, pouring out opium for her with one hand, and tearing her heart with the other. I had torn my own more cruelly. It was very strange, — in her presence every thing exasperated me; when I was alone, she appeared to me good and lovely, and I forgot her provoking situation.

I was thinking of a pretext to see her again, when I received a letter from M. Brudnel. Its first words told me that mine had not reached him. His letter was dated at Pau.

"My dear doctor," he wrote, "I am on the way to Bordeaux, where I am going to arrange with my banker for the full reimbursement of my sister's heirs. It is a simple and easy affair, as, a long time ago, the amount was placed in the banker's hands in anticipation of what has just happened. My income will be diminished one-half; but I regain liberty for the future, and the present is still nat-

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enough. Thanks to my quiet life and the rarity of my follies for many years, I have no debts. There will be no change in my life. You will remain with me, if you love me as I love you; and my dear Hélène, whose future is provided for, will suffer no privation.

"You see my letter is dated at your own town, where I had to stop to take a short rest. I will not leave the town without recalling myself to the attention of your respected and excellent mother. She will hardly recognize me; but, as she has not forgotten my name, I hope she will permit me to call and speak to her of you, and to tell her how well you deserve the affection I feel for you."

The letter had been sealed and reopened. These words were in a postscript: "I have seen your mother. She has not grown old, and knew me before I told my name. We have talked and wept together. Yes, my dear child, we have wept for the dead whom you never knew, and who will be eternally dear to us. And then — I saw your sister, — an angel, — a divine muse! Pardon me; I'm off. I will write you from Bordeaux. In haste. I press your hands."

I had scarcely finished reading this, when Dolores came to ask if there was not a letter for madame enclosed in mine. "Do letters addressed to me," I said, "pass through your hands? I have none for madame; but Sir Richard speaks of her to me. Ask her to allow me to pay my respects."

"She awaits you, doctor; follow me: she is impatient."

I took the letter with me. Manuela seemed much changed, and I manifested some anxiety. "It is nothing," she said. "You forbade me to dance, and I am no better for refraining. But here's the letter: may I read it?"

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She read and re-read it. Dolores looked quietly over her shoulder, and, as soon as she had finished, expressed her opinion. "Not a word of marriage," she said, addressing me as well as her mistress. "You can see that he thinks of it no longer, if, indeed, he ever thought of it."

It was repugnant to me to burrow with this person into the secret thoughts of my friend. I kept silence, despite the supplicating glance of Manuela, who would have liked to know my opinion.

She resolved to reply to Dolores that Richard spoke of his liberty regained, and of his assured present.

"It was to the doctor that he spoke of this. There is not a word addressed to you."

"Very well; I am ever his dear Hélène."

"Whom he has named in his will, and whom he will continue to keep in a fine cage with golden wires."

"Come, speak now!" said Manuela to me.

"You have," I said, pointing to Dolores, "a shrewd and learned counsellor. I will refrain from comment."

"Go away!" she said to the duenna; "you do not please the doctor; he will speak when you have gone!"

Dolores, docile and incapable of resentment, smiled and went out, after whispering a word in Manuela's ear.

Manuela, with unparalleled frankness, repeated the word when we were alone. "*The postscript*," she said, beginning to read the end of Sir Richard's letter. "Well, he has seen your mother. He knew her; he has secrets with her. That doesn't concern me. And then your sister, — a muse, — an angel!" Is she, then, very beautiful, — your sister?"

"Let us not talk of my sister, I beg!"

"Why not? A muse divine! — that is, she has great talents that I have not. But he saw her a moment, and went away. I cannot be jealous of your sister."

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"I forbid you to speak of jealousy in connection with my sister. There are words which it is impossible to associate with certain ideas."

"Oh, great heaven!" cried Manuela, standing erect; "How you despise me! Not worthy to utter the name of a virtuous girl!"

"Yes," I replied, taking her hand and making her sit down; "you are a virtuous girl too: but you have a troubled spirit; and the gloomy companion to whom you have given your confidence aggravates your disorder. She makes absurd notions spring up in your mind. Do you not understand that to suppose Sir Richard to be in love with my sister is to do a mortal wrong to her and to me?"

"Why? She is a saint and an angel: if he loved her he would not hesitate to ask her in marriage."

"He would not do so foolish a thing, for he would be refused unhesitatingly."

"Would they think him too old?"

"My sister would think nothing about it. She does not wish to marry; but her mother and I would protect her from the ridiculous pretensions of a graybeard."

"A graybeard! He is good to me; I know that."

"You make me very miserable, señora. You force me to wound you continually, when I desire only to be silent."

"Don't be silent, but let me talk to you of your sister. Be quiet! I will not forget the respect that I owe her. What is her name?"

"Jeannie."

"And her age?"

"Twenty-one years."

"Why doesn't she wish to marry?"

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"Because she wishes to devote herself to her art."

"What's that? Music?"

"Yes."

"And can one do without love, being a musician?"

"It seems so, since she has done without it."

"Is she truly pretty?"

"She is remarkably beautiful."

"Has she had no offer of marriage?"

"Many! she has refused the best matches."

"How strange that is! Music! Can one love music more than love? I could not have believed that: I do not understand it. She is *dévote*, perhaps: does she mean to be a nun?"

"By no means."

"You have no other sister?"

"No."

"And you let her grow old without a family?"

"We must respect her wishes; because in her all things are worthy of respect."

"And would she not be more worthy of respect if she loved an excellent and charming man, — a man of Sir Richard's merit? Would you hinder her?"

"Yes; because it would be a departure from the natural course, — the caprice of a diseased mind."

"But why, why? You must tell me why!"

"Because the end of marriage for a young woman is maternity."

"Ah, yes!" said Manuela, putting her hand to her heart, as if she felt a pain. "Yes, yes, I cannot talk about that; I never dared to dream of it. Once I thought of it passionately. I wanted to adopt, to bring up, some little unfortunate: that would do me more good than apes and parrots. Richard would not consent. He thought I should

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not know how, and that people would say that the child was ours. Ah! I see plainly the feeling I have had for him has not rehabilitated me: it has not made me good for any thing, helpful to any one"—

"Don't make that charge against him. He meant to marry you. It is you who are mad to keep him near you. Your apparent gentleness concealed an immovable obstinacy,—I should say, shrewd calculation, if I doubted your unselfishness."

"Ah! perhaps you doubt that? Hold! I will no longer endure this life! I have the position of a kept-mistress! As I told you the first day, I suffer dreadfully. This must end!"

"What do you mean to do?"

"I will accept the first husband that Sir Richard offers me. Surely he will not give me to a bad man."

"Not intentionally, I am sure. But he will be deceived."

"An honorable man would not have me, do you mean?"

"With a dowry? Surely not."

"But without a dowry?"

"The honorable man who took you without a dowry would not be a prudent man, unless he was very rich."

"Because I don't know how to do any thing; because I am a sultana,—that's why! I understand. Well, then, I renounce marriage. But I want to go away from here, and I'm going. A hundred times I have had the temptation, and now I have the will."

"Where will you go?"

"Anywhere where I can work, and be obliged to no one!"

"Work at what?"

"That's true; I don't know how to do any thing. But I speak French and Spanish."

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"Not so well as Dolores, who is happy to be a lady's maid."

"My mother earned her living by coloring pictures. One can live on nothing in Paris if one loves Paris; because the pleasure of living there takes the place of every thing. Yes, yes, I will go back there, and I will become a working girl. I shall be very happy thus."

"Perhaps, provided you have something ahead, this will do very well till you encounter the love which will perhaps raise you up, but perhaps, also, will throw you into the river. Stop! your plans are childish and absurd. You have lived too long in luxury to do without it. Besides, your health is too uncertain for you to endure a life of privation. You want an adviser: make no decision; take courage to face the present and the future, and freely consult Sir Richard. Conceal from him neither your disease, nor your weariness, nor your regrets. To him alone your confidence is due; since he alone can accept you for his wife, or render his adoption less painful to your spirit, less harmful to your health. He does not speak of a speedy return; but to-morrow, or the next day, he will surely write to you, and confirm the promise of coming back soon."

I thought I was speaking the truth. M. Brudnel did not write. During fifteen days he gave us no indication that he was alive.

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you speak, and if he does not think, — if he has never thought" —

She placed her hands over my mouth. "Tell me that you love me, or say nothing at all," she answered, with extraordinary decision. "We do not need Sir Richard's permission. He is too honorable and too good a man not to consent. He knows you; he esteems no one so much as yourself: but how would you have me open my heart to him, if you will not give me yours. Come, — a phrase divine, — I love you! that's all I ask of you. Is your mouth impure, is mine so soiled, that we cannot say it together? What do you fear in me? Speak!"

"Every thing," I cried, "especially" —

"Ah, yes, I know: Sir Richard's bounty, the dowry that he intends for me; an honorable man will never accept that, you have said, in moments when you suspected me: but you know very well, you *now* know very well, that I have never belonged to him or to any one. He has the right to treat me as if I were a natural daughter, and I cannot do otherwise than accept his benefactions, because I know not how otherwise to gain my living."

"And my honor!" I said, with trembling lips and dripping brow. "Who, save me, will believe that you have shared his life and borne his name, and yet have not been his mistress? Who will believe that I have refused the dowry, the price of my shame? No, no, my mother and sister would blush for me! I do not love you; I will not love you; I will not be dishonored."

Overcome by my emotions, I sank with my elbows on the table. I could no longer look on Manuela's face, grown radiant and irresistible under the influence of passion. A fearful combat raged within me. I beheld myself dishonored by my desires, and I could not escape from

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them, — could not flee from this cursed villa and save my conscience and my dignity. A devilish spell paralyzed me; my speech still struggled, but my inward energy was prostrated.

There was a minute of silence, and then she rose and placed her hands on my shoulders. "Yes," she said, "I understand. You are right: you cannot, you ought not, to marry me. I am lost; I cannot take the place of a virtuous woman: there are such fates. I ought to have known life better, and I have never thought of it. Like my parrot, I have lived from day to day, knowing not whither my willing servitude would lead me. I have consented to be the odalisque who cannot be raised to the dignity of lawful wifehood. So much the worse for me. Well, refuse to be my husband. That is no reason why you should not love me: since you know I am pure; since you know that I love you to death. I ask nothing but love. All else is nothing in my eyes. Listen, I will say more. I know that you will love me ill, with continual suspicions, with secret contempt for my weakness, with unreasonable jealousy, with cruel words, perhaps with moments of hate and rage. Already have I seen what passes in your mind, and I am prepared for every thing. Yes, I am ready for it all. Love me as you can, I will still think myself happy: my life will have an end, I shall have lived for some one. See you not my horror of living for myself alone?"

I had lifted her head, and gazed at her. Never did sincerity speak with conviction so enthusiastic and so profound. I fell at her feet and looked at her without speaking. Her beauty seemed made divine by the heroism of true love. With her dead pallor, to which the moonlight lent a bluish tint, with her great black eyes, sunken with suffering,

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and her rapturous smile, she made me think of the martyrs whom a Spanish painter has placed between the tortures of earth and the bliss of heaven. "I am yours," I said: "you have conquered; I belong to you. What the future will be, I know not: let us forget it; let us be only in the present, — that is the truth, — we love one another, and, I will tell you at last, I have loved you all my life. Yes, I loved you at sixteen, though I had never seen you: our parents destined us for one another, and I adored you at college. In my dreams I saw you: I hugged your image to my heart; I went to Panticosa, over the glaciers and the precipices, to see you. I saw you not, but I found you at Bordeaux, embarking for Spain with your father. Then, later, I ran to Pampeluna to see you again. I learned things that broke my heart. I wanted to forget you. Again, I found you in the Pyrenees, and for a minute I thought I recognized you; but your new name and your Parisian accent foiled me. Since I have lived with you, I forbid myself, I resist myself; and now, at the very moment when I want to flee from you and detest you, you ruin me. Well, behold me ruined. I adore you. I am crazy because you would have it so."

"Yes, I would have it so," she answered, pressing me to her heart, "and I should never have the right to reproach you, for you have defended yourself against me like a lion. Yet this triumph is not the work of my skill: I have been in earnest, that's all. You see now that love can do without intellect. Come! tell me you love me! tell me a hundred times, a million times. I want to taste the word, which is all my life. Stop! Say it! I feel that when I hear it not, I shall die."

A thousand times I repeated it to her, covering her hands and her hair with eager and chaste kisses, for in the

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first burst of true love there is something paternal. Man always feels the need of deifying and adoring the weakness that flies for refuge to his breast! Hitherto I had been feverish with and ashamed of the thirst of love so frankly avowed by my young patient. I was at once burning with and humiliated by the thought of these flames that the first comer could have extinguished. Enraptured and tranquil in my arms, Manuela made my defeat a victory: she did not yield herself to the evil spirit, but made me mount with her to the home of the angels.

Poor girl, unthinking as a dove, but, like a dove, passionate and soft! I had wronged her by thinking her capable of calculation. She yielded herself wholly, not caring to look behind her, and it was her soul that she gave, unentranced by her senses. The senses! it seemed as if she had never understood their language, never listened to their suggestions. Clasped in my arms, and held against my breast, she had no fever, no nervous tremors, no flushes. She said again: "You love me," with an ineffable frankness, and at the moment when my own feverishness swayed me, struck by her spiritual look and her childlike smile, I fell on my knees at her feet, like a worshipper before the Madonna.

We were suddenly surprised by an unusual movement in the house. I ran to the window. "What's the matter?" said Manuela: "what do you fear?"

"I thought I heard the sound of a carriage. If Sir Richard came back?"

"He could not come without our knowing it. Dolores is on the watch."

"Ah, that Dolores! You'll send her away, won't you? She's odious to me; she's your evil genius."

"I will send her away if you wish it; but you are un-

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just toward her. To her I owe the happiness of knowing that your hate was love. I would not believe it: she advised me to speak to you frankly. I dared to do so at the risk of being scorned, and see how heaven has come down to me. Ah, blessed be the courage with which Dolores inspired me!"

"But this woman didn't advise you to yield yourself unconditionally? She hopes I will accept Sir Richard's bounty, and that she will stay with you."

"Let her hope and calculate as she will: what is that to us? If she gave me bad advice, do you think I have followed it?"

"Ah, forgive me!" I cried, falling at her feet. "Your loyalty is above all things, I see; and I am a coward to doubt you."

"You trust me, then?" she said, putting her little hands in mine. "At last, thank God! Oh, how happy I am!"

"I congratulate you, señora!" said a harsh and icy voice from the end of the room, and which drew nearer to us. We saw, taking shape in the moonlight that fell between us and the door, the pale profile of Sir Richard Brudnel.

I made a movement to free my hands from Manuela's; but she tightened her clasp with her whole strength. "No!" she cried, "keep still, that he may see how we love one another! Would I wish to deceive him?" But as Sir Richard, abruptly turning his back, was about to leave the room, she loosed her hold on me, ran forward and detained him. "My friend, my father," she said, "pardon me for having given my heart without consulting you; but bless my love, which is still worthy of your protection!"

"Still worthy," answered Sir Richard, in an altered

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voice, "implies that your honor is obliged to a trifle, to the chance of my intervention. This is not the first time that chance has protected you, Manuela. Put yourself under the care of that god there: mine will not suffice."

It was the first time I had heard Sir Richard utter a harsh word. "We are lost," I thought: "he loves her." Manuela thought the same; for she drooped her head, and stood abashed.

I was resolved, whatever happened, not to let him abuse her. Yet I restrained myself. I wanted to know all: I had regained control of myself, and expected an explosion; but Sir Richard had also recovered his composure. He spoke to me as if nothing extraordinary had happened. "I beg your pardon," he said politely, "for having so far forgotten myself as to scold this child in your presence. We shall have to have a talk about her; now I will withdraw, for I am tired. I thought to give you pleasure by breaking in upon you; but the coldness of your welcome proves that for you, at least, doctor, I am *de trop*. I'm not sorry for it. I know that, under certain circumstances, the best friends are intruders. Oh, good heavens! I don't trouble myself about it. I blame precipitation, want of confidence, — that's all; but after the blame always comes the pardon, and both of you may count upon that."

Having spoken thus with a shade of irony in his words, he was again about to quit us without waiting an answer.

Manuela placed herself before the door. "You will not go in this way," she said: "Scold me, for I surely deserve it, since you are pained: I accept all reproaches, but I want to justify myself, at least to explain myself. You are tired, dear friend: rest yourself here; tea shall be brought; we will stay to wait on you; and then we will talk, and we will tell you all."

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"But I know all," answered M. Brudnel, with good-natured malice, throwing himself into a chair. "I heard every thing. Dolores begged me to listen, so that I might understand the situation. If I join in your conversation, it is because I desire to save you from a serious error, that of binding yourselves irrevocably to one another, without remembering your best friend. Ring, my dear child, — we are all calm, I think: we might call for lights."

I sat silent while Manuela superintended the serving of tea, and talked to Sir Richard with perfect freedom. Dolores went and came quietly, studying words and faces in speechless anguish. It was evident that she had betrayed us, meaning to make a grand *coup*, to free Manuela from her chains, and force Richard to consent to our marriage.

When she had gone out, M. Brudnel, who had not yet raised his eyes to us, went and shut the doors, laughing as he looked at us. His laugh seemed forced, and tore my heart. "Well, my children," he said, "here we are together and reconciled in advance. You desire an explanation. I'm going to set the example of frankness, — yes, the most absolute frankness."

He took a seat, and spoke as follows: "I know, doctor, that Manuela — with you I must use her true name — has faithfully told to you her own history. I have literally no amendments to make in it: I must only throw light on one point which is still obscure in her mind, and, consequently, in yours. She has thought, sometimes, in the course of our long and innocent intimacy, that, in spite of myself, I have yielded to the power of her charms. She is wholly deceived; I never have been, — I say it to my shame, — I am not in love with her. I have made her only one promise: that I would never marry another woman; I thought I should not marry again. You don't conceal a smile, my

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dear doctor; you think I exaggerate a little my improbable and stupid indifference. You do me the honor to believe that I should have been able to resist even the most powerful temptation, rather than to profane the sanctity of my adoption; but you think that in any case my policy is to escape ridicule, and that I affect a philosophy which costs me little. I'm going to show you that I'm a true Englishman, — phlegmatic, if necessary, at certain crises. Know, therefore, that I came back here to-night with the firm purpose of marrying my adopted daughter, if she would be kind enough to forget my age, and accept my name and fortune. And I took this final resolution deliberately, for reasons to which Manuela was absolutely a stranger. These reasons, strange but serious, I can, I ought, I mean to tell you.

"An unforeseen, an unhoped-for chance has restored to to me my daughter, my own child, lost, hidden from me since her birth. I made the happy plan of reuniting myself with her, of living with her, no matter where, but for ever. This discovery aroused in me profound hope, pride, and joy. But this adored daughter, — whom I cannot acknowledge, perhaps, for a long time, — I cannot have her with me without incurring the risk that calumny, or at least suspicion, will stain her fame. The same injustice has, in spite of me, assailed Manuela. Well, we must prevent one of these evils and repair the other. By marrying Manuela quite openly, I insured her the respect which is her due; I offered for a friend to my daughter a legitimate companion. My house was purified in the eyes of all by this marriage, and happiness could reunite us all therein. So I arrive here, after prodigies of activity, thinking that I was bringing the best possible solution; but love is more rapid than reason, and I surprised you in the midst of a solution quite different. I was for a moment disappointed

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on account of my daughter; but the damage can be repaired. I will make another marriage, — a marriage in real earnest; and as to yours, my children, I suppose that, after what I have said, the doctor will see no more obstacles in the way of it, and will accept, unselfishly, the romantic sacrifice that has been imprudently offered to him. I have spoken: what have you to say in reply?"

"Nothing," said Manuela, kissing her hand to him. "You are an angel of goodness, and, as always, my soul kneels to yours. You would have done me the honor, knowing so well how unworthy I am, of lifting me to your own level. I had foolishly hoped for this to the very moment when true and absorbing love replaced filial affection in my heart. Then I saw that there had been ambition in my devotion to you, — not the greed of wealth. You know very well that such a desire is strange to me; but the pride of captivating a man like you — yes, surely, that was in me, and I had been unconscious of it. The doctor's severity enlightened me. He made me see that if you ever married me, you would do so as a point of honor, and in no wise from inclination. I judged and blamed myself; and now I thank him. I congratulate myself on being no longer a hinderance in your life. I am still proud of your goodness, not humiliated by it; and for what concerns me — well!"

"Well," replied Sir Richard, "here is something that I must speak of, delicate though the subject is. We are three pure-minded and well-meaning persons. There is nothing that we could not say to one another, having no serious reproaches to make among ourselves. I know, Manuela, that you love uncalculatingly, and you avow it unreservedly. I heard! I listened! It is grand in you; but I do not think I have behaved ill in my character

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of father toward you; and I beg you not to esteem yourself so lightly as to abandon yourself to fate without any guaranties. Say nothing more, my child. I know that when your heart is over-excited, it finds an eloquence that you never would learn from books. You thought, apparently, that you had no need of it. You are — what you are — of an admirable child-nature, heroic, because you never see danger. In fine, you are yourself, unlike all other types, capable of rolling into abysses without a thought of evil. This need not be so: it is Laurent Bielsa's part to master the secret of it; and yet I have been unable to draw a monosyllable from him."

I decided to break the silence, although I was not agreeably enlightened by all that had just happened. I begged M. Brudnel to allow me to speak to him in private; and Manuela rose to withdraw.

"No!" cried M. Brudnel, his cheeks flushing deeply, and his eyes showing a sudden brilliancy. "I want no confidences that one of us three cannot share. Either I am an honorable man, deserving all confidence, or we are playing a shameful comedy. Speak, Laurent! speak before her! I wish it, I demand it! It is my right to advise; it is my duty to advise wisely: but you depend only on yourselves. Must I repeat it? Ah, I blush for it, that I have no other right on either of you!"

I seized his trembling hands and pressed them to my breast. "Don't think me base!" I cried. "I esteem and venerate you. Never would I have accepted the sacrifice of Manuela; if, borne on by passion I had forgotten my duty, I would have promptly repaired my fault. I have faith in her; I have faith in you. If I seem hesitating and agitated, it is because I have another fear, — a painful fear. Must I tell you what it is? Can't you guess it?

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You spoke of heroism; it is you who are capable of heroism, and can invest the actions of a Stoic with all the charm of good-breeding. Hold! if I have been deceived by all that I have been forced to hear, and my happiness costs you a regret; if blind and stupid, as I was, I have repaid with ingratitude your faithful friendship, I will not remain here an hour longer. I renounce Manuela! I will never see her again!"

"It is well, my friend," answered M. Brudnel; "I recover you and recognize you. But, reassure yourself, I am not a hero; I am a reasonable man: I am content with having proved to you that Manuela is worthy of your ardent affection, since I should not have hesitated to give her my name. It would have been sad for me not to have known that she loved you. Her filial gratitude would perhaps have led her to sacrifice herself. You now see why, in these circumstances, so momentous in their bearing on the future of us three, I did not scruple to take you by surprise. So all is for the best. We know one another now, and nothing will again disturb our friendship. Now let me retire: I am really fatigued by my rapid journey, and am struggling against sleep. To-morrow we will speak of Manuela's health. I think it is affected only by moral causes, which now exist no longer"—

"And yours?" I said, struck by the change in his relaxing features.

"Oh, don't talk about that," he replied, regaining his vivacious manner: "I have an object in life now. I have my daughter. I want to live, and I will live!"

I followed him to his chamber; but he refused my services, and dismissed me with gentle and affectionate words.

I returned to tell Manuela in a few words that my given

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promise was sacred to me; but that before our marriage I should see her only in M. Brudnel's presence.

"Whatever you wish is right," she answered. "Go in peace; and may God bless you for the happiness you give me!"

I was so exhausted by emotion that I slept profoundly. It was so long since I had slept. For fifteen nights I had struggled with insoluble problems. The solution had come, — abrupt, imperious, without appeal, like a fatality. Whatever it was, it was the end of my anguish, — at least I thought so.

Alas! my real suffering, my torture incomparable to any other, was going to begin!

The next morning I felt, as it were, overwhelmed, and could not write to my mother. Still less did I dare to do this, which — I took myself to task for it — was the first step that I ought to have taken. As I sat down at my desk, Jeannie's letter came under my hand. Instinctively I thrust it into the bottom of the drawer, just as the superstitious Italians muffle a Madonna.

I found Sir Richard very calm, and apparently absorbed in thoughts in which I had no place. During breakfast he asked me about trifling events which had happened in his absence; whether he heard my answers I know not. There was something terrible to me in his icy placidity.

When we were alone, — "My friend," he said, "now we will talk about serious things. The chapter of sentiment was ended last evening. I have only a few days to stay here, — long enough to rest myself, — and then I go. Can you fix the date at which I can return to seal your happiness?"

"You still intend to go away?"

"It must be; and this time I have the sweet assurance that no one here will suffer *ennui* in my absence."

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"No one will be happy here in your absence, at the cost of your own happiness."

He roused himself, half angrily: "You still persist in thinking — is it from jealousy? By what right do you suspect me of feigning a regret I do not feel? Did I not explain myself last evening clearly enough? Is my word no longer of any worth in your esteem? Ah! it is inevitable: there is a woman in the case; and if we are not careful we shall hate one another. I shall go after to-morrow."

"It is I who ought to go," I said, firmly. "The more passionate you are in your natural pride, the more keenly I feel that I am culpable, and that at the bottom of your heart you despise me. You intrusted Hélène to me: you called her *your* Hélène! I ought not to have looked at her; I ought not to have received her confidences; I ought not to have been moved: in a word, I ought not to have fallen in love with her. Believe me, I condemn myself unqualifiedly; and that I wish to punish myself, even should I lose my life in the effort! I leave you. Receive my farewells, and pardon Manuela. She is not in fault: she loved you; and it was I who made her cast away that love as something shameful. Yes, it was I who, with that perversity of selfishness that blind desire suggests to the best natures, made her blush at the thought of her situation; I who, pretending to despise her, suffered her to see my jealousy, and consequently the passion that consumed me. Then this Dolores, who rules her, and whom I hate, pushed us, spite of ourselves, into the gulf. She succeeded in persuading us that you would be very happy to disembarrass yourself, and spite — yes, very probably, spite — cast Manuela into my arms. But you know all; since you watched us, you know that we only exchanged some words" —

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"And some kisses," interrupted Sir Richard, laughing, — "many kisses. Yes, kisses that you can well forget, since you have forgotten what passed at Pampeluna. You alone know Manuela well enough — her greatnesses and weaknesses, her want of reflection, her impulsiveness, the perils of her lonely situation — to be wholly indulgent. You will pardon her, I tell you, and she will love you again, forgetting me."

"If sobs did not choke your utterance," answered Sir Richard, in a softened voice, "I should think that you regretted the promises that you made to her; but I see plainly that she is dear to you, and that you mean to respond to my feigned heroism by real heroism. Come, calm yourself, my child! Dolores is a woman more affected than harmful. In spite of her spying, she has one quality which should win her pardon: it is her sincere attachment, her boundless devotion, to her young mistress. This loyalty gives her in emergencies the courage of frankness; for she has not concealed from me the fact that she has worked against my marriage, — wishing to see Manuela united to a young man who was in love with her, rather than to an old one who was not. I have granted her full confidence on account of this confession, and through her I know the slightest details of your love-making. I know that you have resisted as, probably, I should not have been able to resist at your age. So you have to thank her if I grant you full forgiveness, and forbid you to speak again of your remorse. It would make me ridiculous, and I have not deserved such a punishment."

It was necessary to accept Sir Richard's denials, or to offend him cruelly. I told him that I only waited for his orders as to my marriage, yet I would not like to proceed without obtaining my mother's consent.

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"Ah, ah!" said M. Brudnel, unable to conceal an expression of pleasure, — "yes, there's an obstacle! Your mother has not been consulted. Well, she must know. A mother like yours must not only consent, she must approve. Go, then; but no, wait for me; we will go together: or — no, wait, wait; I will tell you this evening what must be done."

He seemed to hint that I should leave him. "Listen to me a minute," I said. "Since you speak of my mother, there is one thing to which she will never consent any more than I shall."

"She will not consent to my furnishing a dowry for your bride: is that what you mean?"

"Precisely, or even any other arrangement, a secret gift, unknown to the world."

"Yes, I understand. So poor Manuela must be punished for having confidence in me. Well, be it so. Shall you push your scruples so far as to refuse to make your home — yours and hers — with me?"

"Well, yes. I'm sorry to say I should carry so far the fear of what will Mrs. Grundy say."

"No; I think you are not so vulgarly scrupulous. You are jealous, Laurent, — now tell the truth, — you are jealous of me."

"Not just now, — no, — I esteem and love you too much. But I shall be to-morrow, I feel sure. She has loved you, — at least, she told me so; and her wish to please you has been the chief cause of her rehabilitation. Nothing is more simple, nothing better; but love is skittish, unjust, unreflecting" —

"Yes, I know it: so we must separate. How sad and ill arranged all this is! I should have returned one day earlier.

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I do not reproach you, Laurent; but your love will break many things in your life and in mine" —

I knew it but too well, and stood bowed under this sudden decree of friendship. Sir Richard had left me. I went out a prey to profound chagrin; and, as I walked, I revolved in my mind all the frenzies and mortifications of my situation. At a distance of only two steps from Manuela, I forbade myself to see her alone, and I rejoiced in my triumph. I could not have hidden from her my sadness and my fears. But when I noted the approach of the hour when M. Brudnel was accustomed to pay her a visit, I hastened back, my heart torn by Furies.

Returned to the house, I knew not what to do, — how to control myself, how to excuse my scruples and my jealousy. As I loitered in the vestibule, Dolores came up, and, showing me the little door that opened into the garden, said: "She is there, and is waiting for you."

"Is she with M. Brudnel?"

"No: he sent word that he would not come to-day."

"Then no one expects me," I answered; and I went up to my room. Thence I saw Manuela in one of the open spaces where I had often beheld her, laughing and noisy, with her maid and her pets. The latter, now disdained, appealed to her in vain. Sitting on a bench, her eyes fixed on my casement, she smiled when she saw me, and sat motionless, giving me not the least sign of impatience or reproach, but pale as a lily and sad as the grave. I could not resist my anxiety. I asked her by signs if her heart pained her. She answered in the same way that she knew nothing about it. I insisted, with a show of authority. Dolores, who had come up, told me that her mistress was very ill.

At that instant a bell sounded in the house, and, a minute later, John entered my room. This John, with his

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impassible face and his irreproachable attire, seemed less scrupulously powdered than usual; and I thought I detected in his voice, always respectfully calm, a colder tone than its customary one. He was the friend, as well as the servant, of Sir Richard. I imagined that he knew all and was displeased with me. I asked him anxiously if his master was ill.

"His honor desires to see you," he said, not replying to my question; and he added: "at once," in a tone surely not imperative, but which yet irritated me. Every thing stung or wounded me. I thought I felt degraded in the eyes of all.

I found Sir Richard at the window reading a letter, which he instantly refolded. I thought I was the prey of a hallucination. It was Jeannie's handwriting! I told myself that I was in a waking dream, and awaited his orders.

"Well, what is it?" he said, smiling and looking out the window. "Why do you not go to see your patient, you negligent doctor? They have intimated to you that she is ill; take her my compliments. I have many letters to write. I cannot go with you."

"But I will not go to her without you," I answered.

"Why?"

"Because my present agitation would make me say too much or too little. I wish to remain master of myself. Every word spoken to her out of your presence would seem to aggravate my fault."

"Well, my child," he replied, kindly, "since passion is so violent, and your pride so scrupulous, let us go together to see the patient, and let us be gay in order to reassure her. I will write by and by."

He put on a coat, took my arm, and passed blithely into

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the garden. He went forward to kiss Manuela's hand, then turning to Dolores, he retired a few steps, in order, he said, not to interrupt the medical consultation. I found my patient somewhat disordered, though she made no account of it. She was feverish, but denied that she was. Her rapturous look, fixed on my eyes, seemed to say: "What are you worrying about? Speak to me of love: what matter if I die?"

I dared not excite this kind of emotion. I thought it injurious to her, and that it might become dangerous. "You must calm yourself," I said; "it is really necessary."

"But I am cured," she said, with a languishing smile that alarmed me. "I no longer feel pain. There is no room in me for any thing save happiness. What a physician you are, if you do not see that I live only to love! Why are you sad? Do you think Richard wishes us to be sad? You do not know him: he is so good and so wise! He must have talked to you this morning of our plans: why don't you tell me something of them?"

"Our plans are past discussion," I answered. "He accepts them with the magnanimity of a great soul; but do you not fear that he will suffer a little in consequence? And does not delicacy require us to restrain ourselves and try to wait? I ought to go and ask my mother's consent. Till I return, will you promise me not to think of any thing save the restoration of your health?"

"I will do every thing you tell me; but do you really think that M. Brudnel regrets me? Why? We shall not leave him, shall we? There will be no change in the life he has marked out. We will care for him; we will coddle him; he will have two children who will know how to make him happy. Then his daughter? You know he has

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spoken of a daughter; and I'm sure, for my part, that he thinks of nothing but her. He will bring her here, and we will love her. I will be her companion, her servant, if she wishes. If she is like him, she will be one angel the more among us. Come now, is all this sad or disgusting?"

I saw that Manuela lived in her wonted dream of confidence and hope, and I dared not undeceive her. But she noticed the hesitation of my answer; and, as M. Brudnel approached us, she rose and put her arm in his with that caressing tenderness that was so like love, one might easily mistake it for that sentiment. I knew well that such a grace was hers, even in giving an order to Dolores, or in petting her cat. A thousand times had I been struck by it. Then I had said to myself that she must be irresistible in love or in coquetry, — so much the more, as she showed in it an absolute unconsciousness of the measure and the shade. The way in which she bent her head, as if to beg of M. Brudnel the paternal kiss, which he had not given her on his arrival, gave me a thrill of anger. She noticed it, and stood hesitating, suddenly awkward and confused, more submissive to my caprice than it was proper to seem in so delicate a contingency. My vexation increased on this account; and I wanted to withdraw in my turn, and leave them together, as if my jealousy felt the need of giving itself a larger pretext than it already had.

M. Brudnel, who divined my anguish, detained me, and made me sit down between Manuela and himself. His quick perception and generosity were marvellous. "Come, doctor," he said, "I don't want to go away without knowing the result of the physician's examination. How do you find your patient? Better than yesterday, or not so well?"

"Not better," I answered; "she needs rest or diversion;

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I know not which: but there is an excess of nervous activity."

"Perhaps she needs a change of air."

"Perhaps."

"What do you think about it, my daughter?"

"I shall be well anywhere, as I am," she answered, "with you two."

"No," said Sir Richard, "you will be still better *tête à tête* with your husband; but there is no question of separating now. You must be cured first; and I fear that this climate does not agree with you. I have planned the removal of our household gods presently into France, at the foot of the Pyrenees, near the doctor's native country, to a charming spot, where I have engaged a large house at least as comfortable as this villa. It is from this time at my service. I need only write to expedite certain preparations. We can be established there in a week. What do you say to it?"

"Oh, yes, yes, to travel, to change!" cried Manuela, naïvely, become a child again with this father, whose wont it was to spoil her.

"And you, doctor?" said M. Brudhel.

I could only approve, because this journey brought me near my family, whom I intended to visit and consult.

"Well," he resumed, "we will go in two days, if Manuela is no worse."

"Then we shall be married in France! What happiness!" cried Manuela, looking at us, as if she were going to marry us both.

But my jealousy saw something dreadful in the poor girl's candid gaze. This must end speedily, I thought: I could not endure this torture.

Sir Richard understood it plainly. He summoned to his

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he said to me, with beautiful simplicity, "I see this child is going to sleep as children do, and I cannot support her without weariness. Take my place: such an office belongs to your age." He gently raised the sleeper's head, and made me sit next to her; but in a minute she awoke, and began to talk again briskly, all the time pressing closely against me. I saw at once that she was feverish again. Must even my touch destroy her?

The next day I hoped I was mistaken, for she was much better in the morning, and so much improved in the evening that our departure was fixed for the next day. She had superintended all the packing without feeling fatigue. She was rapturous at the thought of going with "her love of husband" and her "love of father." She thought she would never part from either, and I was able to maintain her illusion unbroken. She seemed so well that I thought her quite cured when we reached France.

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PART FOURTH.

I.

WE had taken the steamer at Gênes, and landed at Marseilles. Scarcely were we settled in our hotel when M. Brudnel went out to the post-office. Dinner was in preparation. We, Manuela and I, were together in a large salon lighted by slender candles. It was the first time we had been thus alone since the dreadful *tête à tête* that Sir Richard had interrupted. Manuela approached me with open arms. "How shy thou art with me:" she said; "thou hast not given me a kiss; thou hast not told me a word of love during the journey. There, thou dost not love me, — thou never wilt love me as well as *he!*"

"*He!*" I cried, in a sudden anger I could not repress. "Of whom do you speak? Of the officer at Pampeluna, of the professor of music, or of M. de Brudnel?"

I stopped, alarmed at my own violence. She had grown pale, but she still smiled. "How jealous thou art!" she answered; "M. Brudnel never reproached my unhappy heart with such bitterness."

"Then, surely, he is the one you prefer? You must yet choose between him and me, Manuela."

"Choose! I must leave this angel who has permitted me to love thee? Ah, what injustice, what cruelty!"

I strove vainly to restrain myself. Every word she uttered exasperated me. Her impulsive nature was always deficient in tact and address. She thought that the moment had come to settle our future, and that it must not be lost. She provoked a discussion which neither of

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us was in a condition prudently to conduct. She forced me to tell her that I wanted to separate permanently from M. Brudnel. "Be it so," she replied, "thou wishest it: I yield to thee; and my will shall be thine, since I belong to thee." She threw herself upon my neck, but I felt her form relax and slide from my arms. She would have fallen to the floor if I had not held her up and borne her to a couch. She was cold and motionless; for a minute I thought she was dead.

I pulled the bell violently. Dolores came to help me to restore her. Manuela had fainted with a smile on her face; she regained consciousness still smiling. Dolores looked at me reproachfully; she knew I had chidden her again.

Manuela was soon herself once more, but her pulse had become feverish, and her face was altered. A minute's interview with me had sufficed to destroy the gain in health of many days. She begged us to say nothing to M. Brudnel, so much did she dread his anxiety. She strove hard to prevent him from noticing any thing, made a pretence of eating, and was forced to rise before the end of dinner, saying that she was overcome by drowsiness.

I did not believe this; I was anxious. M. Brudnel was, too. "I pray you," I said to him, "do not leave this city without calling the best physicians to see her. The responsibility is too heavy for me."

"Well," he said, rising, "I will go to my friend C——, and ask him to come in the morning. You go to others."

I went out and speedily did my errands, and was returning, sad and absorbed, when some one touched me on the shoulder. It was my friend Vianne. I clasped him around the neck. He had come to Marseilles on some business. He at once chose the hotel where I was stopping, and went with me to my room.

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"Ah, ah!" he said, looking at me in the light, "your attitude in the street did not deceive me. You are changed; you have suffered. Have you been sick? Have you had a grief? You must tell me every thing. Your mother and sister must not see you with such a face: they would be frightened."

"Yes, I will tell you all; but first tell me of them. You have not written me for a long time. Have you seen them lately? Do you write to my sister regularly? Do you hope to persuade her to marry? If you knew how I need her happiness and yours to support my own foolish and evil fate."

"Your sister, your sister," answered Vianne, looking at me intently, and dwelling on the words with strange emphasis, — "your sister Jeannie" —

"Well, what's the matter?" I exclaimed. What has happened to my sister? Speak: you alarm me!"

"Oh, nothing, nothing bad for her, thank God! I thought you knew, — you don't know, then, — come, I see you know nothing. She permitted me to write to her, but she did not receive my first letter. Your mother sent it back to me unopened, begging me to go and talk with her. I obeyed her request, and she told me some things that she keeps to tell you herself."

"But what? Has Jeannie settled her future?"

"Jeannie is an angel, and I am your best friend. You must be content with that explanation, until further orders. She is well and more lovely than ever. Your mother, too, is handsome and good and true; be worthy of them both! I fear you have been guilty of some folly. You say you are unhappy; come, speak quickly. It is very important that you conceal nothing from me. Will you promise?"

"I swear to tell you every thing."

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I recounted to him to the smallest details all that had passed between Manuela, M. Brudnel, and myself. He listened very attentively, and when I reached the conclusion that Manuela's life seemed to be threatened by my love, —

"Enough," he said, "I expected that. I have followed you as a friend and a physician; now the physician tells you that you must break with Manuela for ever, because effusion will kill her; the friend prescribes the same remedy, because the position is untenable. You cannot sustain a rivalry with M. Brudnel. However innocent his intimacy with Manuela may seem, to unprejudiced persons, for a lover or for a husband there is no intimacy absolutely innocent between persons who have felt involuntary desire, or consented to belong to one another. M. Brudnel well knows this, and the pardon would cost him dear; but he will come to it because he has loved her a long time; it is a habit with him, and old age lives on habits. Only he, as you have well observed, can pardon every thing, and he is more bound than you who accepted your future in an hour of intoxication, while he has accepted a part through years of self-abnegation. You have been the dupe of your senses, my dear Laurent, and still more of your theories as to the rehabilitation of erring natures. Do you remember our discussions? Here you are come to a fatal experiment in our philosophic problems. Can you wash a soul as a garment is washed? I said no, and I say no still. However sincere may be the repentance for the past, there is a temperament which protests, its first impulse remaining invincible. This Spaniard has loved you, unreflecting and unreasoning, as at sixteen she loved the puppy who carried her off at Pampeluna. Since that day six years have been spent in retirement and absti-

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nence, with a clear purpose to enter pure into marriage; and behold how she abandons this project so slowly matured, and sacrifices herself to you simply because you are only twenty-five and a handsome man. With the vanity peculiar to youth and inexperience, you admire this sublime sacrifice; so noble do you think it that you give your honor, the governing axis of all life, in exchange for a moment of nervous exaltation: but now this must abate, for at the end of three days you see that nothing at all has been sacrificed to you; that health, serenity, love, and pleasure, reside still in the magnetic hands of Sir Richard. You only take the transports of your vitality to a sick girl who demands them, but who cannot share them and live. Do you know what it is your duty to do? To go away instantly, to seek your mother and tell her all. You cannot fear that she will give you selfish or cowardly counsel. Hers is a superior mind: she will cut the Gordian knot; and whatever she requires, you must submit to. I think she will forbid you to tell your sister. Your passion for Manuela is not pure enough for her to understand, and as I hope you will come out of it, you would give Jeannie unnecessary pain. Go now; don't wait for Manuela's permission; you would gain it only by renewing promises that you cannot keep. Nor consult M. Brudnel, whose part in this business is mysterious enough: your mother before all the world in an emergency. Go! the courier passes here at midnight: you have time enough to get ready."

"Your advice is good," I answered; "but I have not told you that a consultation is to be had to-morrow, and that I cannot avoid giving an account of the symptoms I have noted and the results of my treatment."

"That's true. Well, let us go to sleep and be clear-

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headed for to-morrow; and to-morrow, when the consultation is ended, I will start you on your way to your native town."

There were two beds in my chamber. Vianne threw himself on the nearest, and fell asleep instantly. I admired his quick intelligence, at once calm and firm. As I listened to his regular breathing, I wondered if he had ever known love, and if his rejection by Jeannie was a severe grief to him.

M. Brudnel thought he ought not to conceal from the consulting physicians the fact that Manuela was on the eve of marriage, and that her passion for her lover was very violent. Two of them said that the wedding should be hastened: the other four declared that it would be her death sentence; she must be separated from her lover, be diverted, and made to forget him at any cost. "If she is inconsolable," said M. C——, "she will die in six months; if she marries, she will live, at the most, six days."

"Now," said M. Brudnel, when we were alone, "all is changed: we have two chances of losing her, only one of saving her: I think, my friend, that you do not hesitate."

"I go this minute," I answered.

"You renounce her," he resumed quickly, "for ever, even when she shall be cured?"

"In that event, I cannot, I ought not. I have pledged my word: she alone can release me."

"Would you hold this opinion, if your mother should advise you otherwise?"

"My mother cannot advise me to forfeit my word, even if it was rashly given."

"Is not a promise which would cause the death of a loved one null and void as soon as you know its fatal consequences?"

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"We are arguing only on a supposition. You have supposed a case of thorough cure."

"Very true; but there is another contingency to provide for, — that of Manuela, restored to health, reclaiming her freedom from you."

"I could do nothing but yield," I answered, and took leave of him. He seemed to me quite unmasked. He loved Manuela unfalteringly: he loved her perhaps better than ever. He was going to dispute with me and with death for her. He took his revenge: no doubt he had counted on it. His unselfishness was, probably, only that of patience.

I was almost irresolute when Vianne came to go with me to the diligence. "Who knows," I asked, "if the grief for my departure, and astonishment at my neglect to bid her good-by, will not prove a mortal crisis for Manuela? She will think that I have betrayed and deserted her."

"M. Brudnel is here to reassure her on your behalf."

"M. Brudnel works for himself."

"Do you know that? That is very fortunate. Well, he will gain his cause. In himself only he can pardon every thing. Will you come?"

"How shall I decide? Since in any event the life of this poor child is imperilled, why should I leave to another the task of devotion and the chance of triumph? If I took her away" —

"If you do not come, I will never see you again in my life!" answered Vianne, dragging me forward. "I do not like basenesses. If this is love, behind this selfish and brutal feeling, I desire never to know it."

He placed me in the diligence: he was obliged to remain two days longer at Marseilles, but promised to inform me as to Manuela's health, and to send me news of her. I had

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introduced him to M. Brudnel, who had received him cordially, and obtained his promise to return.

My mother expected me, though I had not announced my speedy arrival. She had been in correspondence with M. Brudnel, and I found her thoroughly informed as to my heart-secrets. "Since you hadn't courage to write me all this," she said, "there must be something serious between this Spanish girl and yourself. That is what I feared, and your altered face tells me plainly enough that I had reason to be anxious. Do you even know who she is?"

"She is the daughter of Antonio Perez. She has told me of every thing,—even of her error. How well-informed you are! Has M. Brudnel, then, without my knowledge, written you volumes? Where did he get the right to confess Manuela, who knows you not? and I who would have preferred to have the merit of making my own revelations!"

"A good many questions in a breath, my child. I will answer you at leisure, and you will see that Sir Richard is worthy of all your affection,—all your respect. I need two or three days in which to talk with you and make up my mind."

"You want to await another letter from M. Brudnel?"

"Perhaps."

"I did not know that there were rain and fine weather in our house."

"You have brought them into his house far more really. Come, do not bite your lips: you have no blood to lose; you are so pale, my poor child! I want to know every thing; for I could not get in a letter all the necessary details, and I cannot yet form a judgment. Have confidence; we will discuss the matter thoroughly to-morrow. I hear your sister returning from a walk: she will be

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much surprised. I need not tell you that she knows nothing of your adventures, and that it is unnecessary to drop a single word about them in her hearing."

Jeannie came in. Her astonishment at sight of me was so profound that she turned pale; but presently she regained her fresh tints, and threw herself eagerly into my arms. I had never seen her so lovely, so healthful, so happy to see me. What a contrast to the pale and feverish Manuela! Life flowed with full banks in that favored frame; but it was a tranquil and measured flow, because it was strong and steady. What a serenity of intelligence in those blue eyes, limpid as a clear sky! What freshness in the fond smile that lighted up her whole face! "Good heavens!" I cried; "how beautiful and well you are! Music is a good regimen, I see."

"It is not music alone," she answered, kissing her mother; "it is, above all, this person here. One pines when away from her, for I see that you are thin. You need to come back to the fold; we will take good care of you. I will attend to the preparation of dinner. Mother, you will let me? I'll not spoil my pianist's fingers, I promise you, — and even if I should spoil them a little!"

"Do you go into the kitchen? You! You are, then, much changed."

"No, I am a born princess, you know very well; but mamma grows weary by sparing me. More than twenty years she has served me, and I intend hereafter to serve her in my turn. Will you help me?"

"In the kitchen? I know nothing about culinary matters!"

"In the kitchen if necessary. You have grown pale over your books, I see plainly; I'm going to make you stir yourself, and work like a porter, I warn you!"

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"I ask nothing better. What shall I do? Give your orders; I shall not be sorry to do a little porter's work, I've been living like a prince so long. Must I go and split wood?"

"Not yet. Rest yourself to-day, after your journey. How did you leave your worthy patron?"

"M. Brudnel? Is it true that you know him quite well now?"

"Oh, yes; he came to see us twice, going to Bordeaux and returning. The last time he stayed three days with us."

"Indeed! Mamma did not tell me that. And you have received him into a fine friendship, — my worthy patron?"

"A grand friendship. He loves you so well, and is so good! I assure you he is adored in this house. Talk to us about him, and about — the *señora.*"

"What *señora?*" I said, looking at my mother in amazement. "Jeannie cannot know" —

"M. Brudnel has spoken to us of his household," calmly replied my mother. "In three days when companions are sympathetic, they tell one another a good many things. He told us that an adopted daughter lived with him, who was not his wife, as was commonly supposed, but whom he intended to marry, to prove his respect for her. He told me this young girl's history, which interested me, because I was slightly acquainted with her father, — in rather disreputable circumstances, I must admit; but that is no reason why the Señora Manuela should not be an estimable person."

"I am sure, for my part," said Jeannie, innocently, "that she is charming. M. Brudnel could not make any but a good choice. You know her, Laurent; tell us about her."

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"That couldn't interest you much," I answered; "let us rather speak of yourself. Talk music to me; have you made great progress?" And — as I saw that she was going to insist on an account of Manuela — "Come," I resumed, "play something for me; I am thirsty for music; I have been deprived of it a long time."

"Well, if I must confess it," she answered, "it is a week since I opened my piano, — not since I played for M. Brudnel."

"Did he give you a disgust for music?"

"Quite the contrary; but in music, as in all things, there are phases of selection" —

"Besides, she must see to the dinner," said my mother; "she has promised to do it; and for to-day I agree not to lift my hand about it, so that I may remain with you. Go, my Jeannie; there's no time to lose if you want to give your brother the dishes that he likes."

Jeannie ran out in high spirits.

"How she is transformed!" said I. "Such gayety, such animation, — I do not recognize her! What has become of her habits of reverie, of her seasons of melancholy?"

"All that has changed; gradually her health has become robust."

"But no. All this has happened lately. Might it not have been since Sir Richard's visit?"

"What do you mean?" returned my mother, looking at me keenly.

"Oh, I know nothing about it. M. Brudnel, in one of his letters, seemed so impressed by my sister's beauty and talent, that I want to know if he did not fall in love with her at first sight?"

"What nonsense!"

"Why not? The old man has a young heart, and a

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lively imagination. As soon as he saw himself supplanted by me, he said very impulsively that he had another marriage in view, — one of serious importance. He was not sure that it could be arranged, but he did not despair."

My mother listened, laughing. "If you told me," she said, "that he perhaps thought of me, I should tell you you were a fool; but when you think that he dreams of Jeannie, you are really stupid."

"It is possible. Yet Sir Richard is very fascinating; and, old though he is, I find myself, in competition, forced to regard him as a very formidable rival. Women are so strange!"

"Jeannie is not strange: she is intelligent and noble. I pray you do not continue this pleasantry, which would wound her and trouble me."

"Pray, pardon me. But tell me does Jeannie love any one?"

"What makes you think that?"

"I have seen Médard Vianne. He gives her up, and refuses to tell me why. He says it is for you to tell me; and I expect a strange revelation."

"You will wait for it! If there were a secret of any kind in the depths of my holy daughter's heart, I would not tell it to you before knowing that your heart — yours — was pure enough to receive so delicate a trust."

"You no longer have confidence in me, and you suspect. I thought I should receive here balm for my wound; but I find only an increase of sadness, of uncertainty, and confusion for myself."

"My poor child!" said my mother, pressing my head to her bosom, "when I think that but for this fancy for an unknown girl you could have been so happy! But perhaps all this is not so serious as we think. Let us be patient, and hide our anxiety from Jeannie."

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"You always loved her better than me," I said. "Admit it. I am not jealous of her. Pure and holy sentiments know not selfishness."

The dinner was simple, according to our custom, but rich in little sweets of intimacy. They gave me the dishes that I had loved in childhood. Jeannie was lively and loving; our mother was adorable. Jeannie gave me wine from our own vineyard, which I preferred to all others, and pretended to make me intoxicated. I asked nothing better; but the frenzy did not reach my heart. In the bosom of a family resides a truly sovereign influence. For a moment I forgot my sorrowful wanderings, and imagined myself again a boy of twelve. After dinner, Jeannie yielded to my request, and sat down to the piano. Her music was admirable, and led me into delicious reveries. It seemed to me, when I entered the little chamber of my boyhood, that I was cured.

The next day, my mother listened to my full confession. She heard it even more fully than Vianne had done; for she interrupted me with a thousand questions, so particular, that at last she saw me as in a mirror. Yet she did not give a decision; she firmly refused even to make any comments, and did not conceal from me that she waited for a letter from Sir Richard, to inform her more thoroughly as to the situation.

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II.

THE time of waiting was spent in visits that I was obliged to make, and in walks on which my mother and Jeannie asked me to accompany them. Jeannie, usually engrossed with her work, took pleasure in going out with me, and showing an interest in every thing. We conversed, and I was surprised by the wide scope of her ideas. Since my college life I had scarcely had a long talk with her; I might say that I didn't really know her. She had always lived in an inner world, where she shut herself up mysteriously; now she emerged from it, and her coming was like a fine sunrise on a quiet sea. She loved to versify her imaginings; but she laughed at this weakness, and begged pardon for the reveries into which her listeners were led, so well did she express her meaning. This mute spirit, which for so long had found its only utterance in music, seemed to have gained courage to reveal itself in language. Fearing to feed her vanity, I concealed my surprise and delight; but I felt vain in her behalf. I felt that I was becoming as proud of her as our mother was. Especially did I admire the beauty of her thoughts, and her application of them to her feelings. She was not foolishly optimistic; she did not seem to be a child. She did not see every thing in bright colors, but what was dark she illuminated with the light of her charity and pity. It was as if she had resolved firmly to extend her love to all beings, and, so to speak, to devote herself in a universal consecration. She said she had read very little. Had she found in musical transports these treasures of gentleness, these potencies of wisdom and equity?

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I learned to admire her with a feeling full of fascination and affection. I spoke of it to my mother, and began to understand why a woman like Jeannie had not yet found some one to love: even my friend, Vianne, now seemed to me beneath her, and I could not have ventured to plead his cause.

"The fact is," said my mother, "that you have never understood Jeannie. I foresaw, I read this in her. She has been long in finding her way. She dreads mediocrity, and in nothing will she content herself with a makeshift. This very music that has impassioned her she approached with trembling. At once modest and ambitious, she fears that she may fail to reach her ideal. Timid, she has long distrusted herself. The admiration of others was needed to give her confidence; and I must say that Sir Richard's was essential to teach her her own powers. She saw that he was a competent judge; and from that day she has kept her piano shut, as if to enjoy her triumph. Don't imagine that Jeannie thinks of performing in public. She composes music, which, perhaps, will never see the light; for only the works of celebrated composers are successfully published, and Jeannie would not become famous abruptly. She will never consent to profit by her personal charms. She desires not wealth; our humble independence contents her. I think that even poverty would not be very disagreeable to her. The single problem she has to solve is to find expression for the musical thoughts that oppress her. If she still has days of silent reverie, it is because the muse is struggling within her. Finding under her fingers the true cause of her ardent fancy, she is herself again, — she blossoms, she is happy. It took me some time, ignorant as I was, to understand all this. Now I have succeeded. I have brooded the golden egg, not knowing what was in it.

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When the Phœnix rose I was tranquil, and triumphant too."

My mother always expressed herself easily. But since Jeannie had begun to talk, my mother spoke better than before. I noted a striking improvement in this woman of fifty, who had acquired all that she would have her daughter acquire. I was impressed by this mutual influence, which had widened their horizons.

"Why are you surprised at that?" continued my mother. "It hasn't been done by the stroke of a witch's wand. For twenty years we have striven to grow together, your sister and I. You did not notice it: you were too young to judge us. You could not see that every day we were beyond the point of the day before; and then you began to plunge ahead in your forced theories, and, naturally occupied with yourself, you gave little attention to us."

"That is possible; and besides, having had no experience, I had no standard of comparison. Now I have awoke from my stupid personality, I see that I am only a child in the presence of two superior beings, perhaps a child quite unworthy of such a mother and such a sister."

"You have always been worthy of the warmest affection and the highest esteem," answered my mother, "only you have perhaps been rather young in recent days. We shall see, we shall see; I do not yet give judgment."

I received a letter from Vianne. Manuela was quite calm. My departure had not induced a crisis, M. Brudnel having told her that I was naturally impatient to go to ask my mother's consent. She had gone with him to Montpellier, where they intended to remain several days before taking possession of their new home. "M. Brudnel," wrote Vianne, "asked me to engage rooms for them at Montpellier, and I shall see them again. I shall speak to

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you of them with full knowledge." My mother also received a letter from Sir Richard which she did not show me; she only said that the patient had borne the journey as far as Montpellier, and that they would stay there some days before joining us. Sir Richard said he had been able to reassure Manuela on my account, "well knowing that I was incapable of breaking my word."

To this laconic statement, my mother added a comment not less concise: "So," she said, "Sir Richard thinks that if Manuela gets well, she is to become your wife."

I was angry with Sir Richard. I replied that he only referred to my own decision, and that I did not understand why my mother should need the assent of a stranger in order to grant me the right of doing my duty.

"Do you blame me?" said my mother, with the proud, sweet smile, that I knew so well, and that lifted her above all suspicion. "You will see that you will do me justice by and by; as to the present, I have said nothing; it is you who made me speak. I told you M. Brudnel's opinion, not my own."

"But it is yours, and yours only, that I want."

"Well, here it is. All depends on the course taken by M. Brudnel. I am sure that it will be utterly unselfish, and that he will subordinate all his resolutions to Manuela's state of health. You have imperilled the life of this girl: it is for him to judge whether your presence will destroy or save her. Learn to wait. I am content, for my part, to accept the consequences of your infatuation, though they may be painful to me, rather than to find myself in disagreement with your conscience."

I admired my mother's rectitude and courage, for I could easily see how thoroughly she disapproved my choice. I had shown a desire to see M. Brudnel without Manuela's knowledge. She did not oppose my wish.

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Yet I did not do this. I even delayed, day after day, writing to Sir Richard; at last I reached the point of telling myself that he would notify me if he thought it his duty to confer with me. I felt an extreme reluctance to make any advances whatever toward him. Yet my nerves were quiet: the frank, sweet, home life restored me to myself; the image of Manuela had vanished like a dream. I thought that if she consented without protest to my going away, it was because, after all, she preferred the tender ministrations of M. Brudnel to the violence of my passion. Indeed, every hour passed away from her seemed to slacken the bond, and I could not think without dread of the final moment, when, summoned to her side, I should be forced to accept the recrudescence of affection and gratitude with which Sir Richard must have inspired her. I liked infinitely better to anticipate that the tender cares bestowed by him alone would cure her, and that she would suffer herself to be persuaded to release me from my promise. My pride felt no wound at the thought of being supplanted by a man more clever than myself. I saw that I had acted like a child; I deserved the lesson I had provoked.

In this train of thought I wrote to my friend Vianne, reproaching him for having sent me no tidings since his first letter. I received from him this answer:—

"Since you have returned from the realm of chimeras, since you have given proof a hundred times, and much sooner than I had hoped, of all that I said to you as to the fragility of your passion for the odalisque, I can speak to you of her tranquilly. I see her every day, and I assure you she will get well. You know I did not agree with the great doctors of Marseilles as to the gravity of her disease. Nervous affections have the unfortunate privilege

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of simulating so exactly other organic troubles, that the most skilful practitioners are sometimes deceived. The case of Mlle. Perez, pathologically regarded, is quite interesting to me; and as I am the only one who has augured favorably as to her recovery, M. Brudnel has begged me to attend her professionally. I have dared to go contrary to established prescriptions; I have permitted movement, and even, in a measure, exercise of the emotions, which is so strictly prohibited. She has been to the theatre, and was none the worse for it. In fine, she will probably get well: I would say *certainly*, if any thing in the future of human affairs could be counted on. Dismiss your alarm: 'your love has not killed her.' That was a fine phrase, and I regret its loss for you. You will have no need to record it in the story of your romantic fate.

"But her recovery, which you dread as much as you long for, will not compromise your future, I hope. The odalisque was not so deeply in love with you as you thought; or rather, she yielded to a caprice of the imagination, as you yielded to the ardor of youth. I think she really loves M. Brudnel more than all the world, which convinces me that she has more heart than sense. Will M. Brudnel marry her? I don't know. He promises to do so now; he makes a duty of it: but I begin to doubt whether he loves her. He has passed the age of infatuation. Whatever the end may be, it concerns only them, and we have no need to trouble ourselves about it.

"Present my profound and affectionate regards to your mother and sister."

After this letter I felt happy and free, as I had never before felt: it seemed as if one must have suffered in order to know the value of life. One must have travelled a little, too, in order to appreciate one's native land. I loved

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now my mother, my sister, and my country, as I had never loved them before; and, anticipating a final separation from M. Brudnel, I thought of settling at Pau. The removal of one of the many physicians who shared the practice, the death of another, the infirmities of a third, opened a little place for me, which I much preferred to servitude to a single client. My mother saw little society; but my sister's talent tended to enlarge the sphere of their relations: they both enjoyed the high esteem and sympathy which they deserved. During the first few days I was called to several neighboring houses, and was successful in my treatment. While I was with M. Brudnel, I had learned so much of English, that the English families living at Pau were pleased to be able to converse easily with me, and eager to recommend me to one another. I told my mother of my desire and intention to remain with her, and this gave her great pleasure. "You will make but small gains at first," she said, "but we shall live very well, nevertheless: we know how to manage, and I see that you have no more wants and fancies than we have. Yes, yes, stay; and you will find that you will be happy."

"And if you should not be," said Jeannie, "how happy you will make us!"

"Those words," I answered, "would determine me, if I were uncertain."

In my thoughts, I effected the severance of my professional relations with M. Brudnel, with the more assurance, since, if, contrary to all probability, I was going to become Manuela's husband, I ought at the same time to think of providing support for her independent of her protector's bounty.

Three months passed away while we waited for a solution of the question. M. Brudnel, who was still at Mont-

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pellier, often wrote to my mother. Manuela's health was much improved. Moreover, there was not a word for me from Manuela in these letters, which my mother refused to show me, and when I showed some suspicion, — "Montpellier is not very far away," she said; "you can go and inform yourself."

Did she know that that was what I most dreaded?

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aid all the resources of his amiable and ingenious mind to divert Manuela and to restore my confidence. In her case, he succeeded instantly. He amused her; he remitted her to her childish instincts; he made her laugh. He knew her better than I did; he knew what chords he must touch to restore her natural vitality. He, too, had a power of coquetry, and I saw plainly that he had always employed it, even in his paternal *rôle*. In it lay the charm of his society to Manuela, — a charm that, probably, I could never supply.

I succeeded in concealing the bitterness of my thoughts; and Sir Richard congratulated himself upon having conquered my unspoken opposition by his address and apparent ease. At the end of an hour he was going to leave us together, but I rose, resolved to follow him. I feared to let Manuela see my inward torture.

"Positively, I must see my courier; but we three can dine together, — can we not, doctor?"

"Dine? Why, she is feverish!"

"Are you sure of it?" said Manuela, stretching out her arm.

Her hand was cool. Under the soothing influence of Sir Richard the fever had been suddenly dissipated.

Another dagger-stroke for me. My love destroyed Manuela; the tender affection of Sir Richard restored her to life.

The dinner was almost lively, and after it we took a drive in the carriage. Slowly we skirted the shore of the lake, which was not more than two kilometres from the villa. Autumn announced its coming. The air was soft, and the lake lovely in the reflected light of the sinking sun. The noiseless roll of the carriage on the fine sand permitted conversation, and M. Brudnel talked with all

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his wonted fascination. Manuela gave unrestrained expression to her feelings. She was *en confidence*, she said, for the first time, with him in my presence. Hitherto, at our Sunday dinners, I had found her bashful and timid, even to the point of silliness. Now she threw off restraint; she boldly asked questions; she argued in her fashion; she said: "I understand this," or "I never shall understand it;" or, again, she offered objections, sometimes ridiculous in their simplicity, sometimes shrewd and subtle, with a childish wisdom. Only now did I understand the amusement that her frankness and amiableness could afford to the lofty and thoughtful mind of Sir Richard. Why had he never fallen in love with her? And if he had done so, as I persisted, in spite of myself, in suspecting, why had he not wished to marry her long ago? Must this strange contract between his sister and himself be accepted as *bonâ fide*? And was there not a reason still more material which made Sir Richard dread to become a grievous deceiver where he had been an agreeable charmer?

In my heart I adopted this conclusion, which seemed most probable, and which explained to me why M. Brudnel had doubtless meant to lead Manuela by his mode of life, to content herself in the future with a quiet friendship. He had left her sunk in indolence, and wedded to the empty and unemotional life which he had planned for her. In his absence I had thrust trouble, passion, suffering, into that soul which had so easily grown torpid. He ought to have cursed me, and I was compelled to admire the triumph of his strength over my weakness.

After her gay prattle, Manuela became sleepy. The sun was setting. The carriage brought us back toward the villa. Manuela dropped her head on Sir Richard's shoulder, who sat by her on the back seat. "My friend,"

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III.

THE conversation of my sister became more and more interesting, and, as it were, necessary to my life. She revealed to me a new being, emerged from the troubles of youth, before I had studied or comprehended the stages of her development. I had found in Manuela, older and more experienced, that depth of silliness and frivolity that characterizes the common young girl. Jeannie was quite different. She judged with frank boldness of what she had not proved; she wanted to penetrate and understand. Her youth and the purity of her life did not obstruct the intelligent curiosity of a mind, the more active for its long retirement within itself. I had never questioned her as to the most delicate subject of her thoughts; but one day brought some curious revelations as to this mysterious topic.

We were walking in the park of the château of Pau, one of the most beautiful places in France. Jeannie, who held my arm, pointed out a young woman, a sort of spectre, with fixed eyes, sitting on a bench beside an older female, not less sad in appearance and seeming to be withdrawn from all the things of this world. "Is she not Mlle. C——," I asked, "one of your companions at the convent, and who has become insane?"

"Alas, yes! You see her condition! Her mother dies with her. She desires only to live till poor Louise's last breath. Don't appear to see them: they will run away, without answering us."

"Is the cause of this insanity known?"

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"Yes, it is known," answered Jeannie, "it is a disappointment in love. There's no harm in saying it: she has had no other rude experience. She had fixed her heart and hopes on a young man, who was quite unconscious of her feelings, and never had thought of her. On the day of his marriage, Louise fell into this gloomy melancholy, which has gradually deepened into settled insanity. Physicians say that her thwarted inclination was only the accidental pretext seized upon by an already wandering imagination. Yet I remember Louise as a sensible and lively girl. What do you think of her?"

"As I don't know her, I have no opinion."

"But do you think she could have become mad on account of a passion unavowed and unreciprocated?"

"Every thing is possible to diseased brains: they may be disturbed by a sickly fancy."

Involuntarily, as I spoke thus, I recurred in thought to the time when Jeannie, a mere child, believing that she was not my sister, undertook to forbid me to marry: but I did not mention this reference to a past, probably forgotten by her, as it had been by me, since the day when we saw our certificates of birth.

To my great surprise, Jeannie — whether the same reminiscence visited her, or whether her mind was merely impressed by the painful meeting with her old friend — opened to me for the first time her ideas about love.

"Few things in my life have so impressed me," she said, "as the crazy despair of that poor Louise. I was quite intimate with her, even after we left the convent, and she confided to me — though I did not attach much importance to it — her passion for M. Louvet. He was a very insignificant young man, — you know him by sight, — and is now a fat little trader, ugly enough, and of no account what-

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ever. When I saw Louise's reason fading away, and knew the cause of it, I made some reflections which were, perhaps, not suited to my age. Louise was my senior: I was only fifteen. Mamma must remember it: I told her then every thing that came into my head."

"I remember very well," answered my mother calmly; "you deemed love a disease of the soul, and you were terribly afraid of it, so afraid that you wanted to become a nun to escape it. I had much difficulty in making you understand that one didn't take this malady against one's will, and that it was very easy to avoid it, as one avoids physical diseases, by careful diet and good bodily habits."

"And you cured me of my fear," said Jeannie; "but you did not cure a certain aversion that I should feel still, if the god of love in person should present himself to me."

"What do you mean by the god of love in person?" laughingly asked my mother, who questioned Jeannie on the most delicate subjects, sure as she was of the perfect candor of her replies.

"Love in person," answered Jeannie; "is a very dangerous phantom. The ancients made him a god, because they deified all that was terrible, — the furies, the passions, and all scourges of human life. The moderns are not much wiser about love. You have permitted me to read some romances, and I have seen love deified in them also. The poets tell us it is an irresistible power, and the monotony of their ideas has finally bored me sadly. I am disgusted at last to see always on the stage personages, men or women, so superstitious or so complaisant to one another. These romances and poems have done me great good: they have taught me to reason about a sentiment of which young girls usually speak with silly blushes, as if they felt

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vanquished in advance by it, or with a sort of effrontery, as if they knew all about it. For my part, I have dared to look this great question in the face, and I have said to the evil god: 'If you are a blind and cruel child, you will never rule me. I defy you to make me selfish against my will, and I will not be.'"

At this moment there passed an old woman who carried in her basket little sugar figures for children. It was a fashion of asking alms, for she held out her hand, without offering us her canary-birds, flower-pots, and doves in miniature. Jeannie gave her a coin, and seeing in the basket an *amorino* in a red tunic, and bearing a torch, she asked, jestingly, if it were Love or Hymen. "*It is both*," answered the old woman, handing it to her: "Take it, my beautiful girl; it will bring you good fortune."

"I take it, — thanks," said Jeannie, and she put it in her pocket, where it was speedily forgotten; for we met friends who accosted and accompanied us part of the way.

But the chapter of love, accidentally interrupted, was accidentally resumed, at the end of dinner. Jeannie, looking in her pocket for a key, found therein the *amorino*, — half plaster, half sugar, — and putting it on an orange, said gaily: "This represents Love, the tyrant of the terrestrial globe."

"And you persist," I said, "in heartily despising him?"

"We cannot despise what makes us afraid," she answered; "but we study him, and I desire to inquire into the proceedings of this pale and bloated Cupid."

"Go on! I am eager to know your opinion."

"First," she continued, inspecting his face, "let us know who you are. Your name? Love or Marriage?"

"And if I am Marriage!" said I, speaking for the problematical *amorino*.

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"If you are Marriage it is very different. I think you wise, good, affectionate, and devoted. I give you my esteem. But you lie! You are not an honorable and pure god; you are the foolish and wicked Cupid. Your torch, which looks like an umbrella, pretends to set fire to the universe. Well, my little friend, see what I do with you. I dethrone you!"

She tossed the hapless son of Venus in the air, and he fell, with broken nose, into my plate.

"Behold a judgment rather too summary!" I cried. "The old woman said that this god was both Cupid and Hymen; that is to say, love in marriage."

"That is false. Love has nothing to do in marriage, which is affection, and not what your romances call 'love;' that is to say, a clap of thunder, — sleeplessness, jealousy, unjust suspicion, intolerable tyranny, all things bad, injurious, and stupid. You were dethroned, Monsieur Love; and see how you lie to get back on your orange! But your nose is broken, and I'm going to pull out your wings, so that you shall make no more dupes!"

And Jeannie mutilated the figure with a sort of cruelty, amid bursts of laughter.

I could not refrain from asking her why she had not married Vianne, who thought just as she did.

"Is one bound," she answered, "to marry every one who shares one's opinions; but you who are saying this, do you not think as I do?"

"No; I do not make that subtile distinction between love and affection."

"Then it is a case of degrees. Do you think that love can be tender and devoted?"

"But do you think that affection can be violent and passionate?"

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"You embarrass me. What a casuist you are!"

"I am logical. I have asked of God and my mother the secret of happiness; for all children desire to be happy without troubling themselves about being good. God and my mother answered me: 'Happiness is making others happy.' I have reflected on this rule that my mother knows so well how to put in practice, and gradually, after the inevitable relapses into natural selfishness, I made my little moral all in one piece: 'To give to others all the happiness that we can procure for them.' This is short and simple; and since I have been used to apply my theory to all my resolutions, I have always noticed one thing,—that I have been very happy, and that it was in the power of no one to destroy my happiness. So, whether I decide to marry or not, I defy the gentleman who shall love me to reproach me with good cause, and I defy him also to cause me a grief for which I will not pardon him."

"You arrange marriage to your liking. The experience of most marriages contradicts you. Because most of them are unhappy or full of trouble, we ought to bring as much love as possible into them."

"By way of compensation? That is badly reasoned. Love, as you understand it, is the chief cause of trouble. It is the right to tyrannize; to be jealous; and, consequently, sour, angry, and unjust."

"But you're using my theory there. Did I give you authority to do it? Do you know what I mean by love? I have never told you what I know."

I turned toward my mother, asking her by a look, if Jeannie, informed as to that which she had bidden me conceal, alluded to my adventure? Her eyes answered me that Jeannie knew nothing, and argued only for the sake of arguing.

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"Come," I resumed, "agree that there are two kinds of loves, — that of great souls, which is grand and generous, and that of common souls, — feeble natures, undeveloped intelligences; this last I abandon to you. I am neither strong enough nor great enough to refuse charity or pity to those who become its prey; but I appreciate the just pride which makes it hateful, contemptible to you."

"You mean to tease me?" said Jeannie. "Go on; I'll permit you."

"He is not teasing," said my mother. "He understands that you are willing to unite your life only with that of a being whose love will be as great as the idea you have of it."

"Then, Vianne was not that being?"

"No," replied Jeannie; "M. Vianne is very great in his principles; but he leaned to the side opposite to the common notion. He suppresses affection entirely, and recognizes only duty."

"He pretends to do this; but he is not so strong as that: I am convinced that he really loved you."

"What do you call really loving? Come, now, say!"

"To cherish and respect. Is that it?"

"Yes, that's not a bad definition. Well, M. Vianne could respect, but could not cherish. So you greatly counted on my becoming Mme. Vianne!"

"That established you near us. Who knows whither the enthusiasm of your theory may bear you?"

"Never far away from her," answered Jeannie, earnestly, pointing at her mother. "Oh, never that!"

"Very well; but your mother could follow you to the end of the world; and I who am going to settle here, and whose profession is a bond, what would become of me without you?"

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"Yet you left us to travel. We were not then so necessary to you."

"I was a fool and a wretch to quit you; so sure am I of it that here I am returned to remain always."

"Do you swear it?" asked Jeannie, looking at me fixedly. "Swear it!"

"I swear!" I cried. "You have bewitched me; you have made me forget all that is not you two. So see me like yourself, my Jeannie: no marriage, no love, if tyrants, passionate or tender, are going to separate us. Here, give me Master Cupid. I want to swear on his head to abjure his tyranny for ever; and, if he seeks to turn me from this resolve, see how I will serve him!"

And I crushed the god of love under a carafe till he was reduced to powder.

Jeannie rose: my mother and she looked strangely. "What is the matter?" I asked.

"Nothing," said my mother. "Jeannie remembers that she has forgotten to write a letter; but she has still time to do it. Come to the parlor: I have something to tell you." She called the servant, and ordered her to admit no callers.

"The moment has come," said my mother, when we were seated. "You have just done a serious thing, which Jeannie did not understand as I did. You have just destroyed Manuela!"

"Well, yes, I did think of her as I crushed that Love, in the sense in which it almost destroyed me. If Manuela does not claim the performance of my promise, I will follow Sir Richard's example: I will tell him that my sister does not permit me to marry, and I will swear to him that I never will marry another woman. How should I be more culpable than he?"

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"You did not love her, then, this poor girl?"

"I loved her as Sir Richard loved her. I longed for her, and she threw herself into my arms. I kissed her hands and her forehead. You know very well that I have told you the truth."

"But supposing this kind of love, Sir Richard has always withstood his passions, while you yielded to yours."

"I — I am twenty-eight years old!"

"Very true; but would she have become your mistress if Sir Richard had not arrived in time?"

"I don't know. The blind worship of this poor girl had filled me for a moment with dizzy enthusiasm, and enthusiasm is not sensual. I was in the dream of chastity when Sir Richard surprised us; and who knows if I should have succumbed to selfishness? Why will you not admit that I might have triumphed over mine? I did not yield without a struggle; and, unwittingly, Manuela, offering herself to me without condition, forced me skilfully into the last entrenchment of my conscience. The sudden coming of M. Brudnel also forced my mind to an engagement, the mere thought of which would have driven me frantic an hour before, and did make me frantic an hour after. Ah, I felt it keenly already. Never could I love with my heart a woman who shared her heart as Manuela did between her protector and myself. I could separate her from him only by causing both a mortal sorrow. I had seen her; I had comprehended her; and I despised in myself the evil feeling which led me yet to press a claim for her. Thus, whatever Manuela may be, I have not loved her well; an affair of temperament, I fancy, which is equivalent to saying that I never could love her in a manner to make her happy and to feel that I myself was happy."

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My mother was silent for a minute; then she answered:

"If, this very instant, I told you that she had recovered, and was expecting you?"

"Would it be true? Hide nothing from me!"

"If M. Brudnel summons you, in the name of honor, to perform your rash promise?" —

"I would tell M. Brudnel that he has a greater reparation to make than I, — he who has suffered Manuela to pass for his wife."

"But I — if I told you that I thought you were strictly bound?"

"You! I would go instantly, but with death in my soul. I would sacrifice the repose and dignity of my life to an instant of unreflecting self-love; but if this is the price of your esteem" —

I burst into tears. My mother clasped me in her arms. "Breathe again," she said, "I am pleased with you. I will not exact so cruel an expiation. Manuela, though not fully restored, is out of danger, and has regained the partial health that was hers before these great storms. She is no longer under the shock of passion, and, whatever she may have said, she means to live. She is frightened by the violence of her infatuation, and reproaches herself for it. She falls at M. Brudnel's feet, and M. Brudnel marries her!"

"Ah!" I cried, leaping like a young colt set free. "He is right, the worthy man. I begin to love him with all my heart."

My delight was so undisguised that my mother could not help laughing. "Pardon me," she said, "for not telling you sooner of this result, which I so clearly foresaw. I have known it for fifteen days; but I wanted to assure myself that there was nothing serious in your passion."

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"Well, it *was* serious! I struggled hard, and suffered foolishly: but it was neither profound nor enduring; and I indulged in no illusions on her account. I know now, — I felt it then, — I can give my heart only to a woman like my sister or you. What do you say? I have been spoiled at home! But tell me what M. Brudnel intends to do with reference to *me*, or how I must conduct myself toward him? Is it required that I should withdraw my promise?"

"It is surrendered to you simply and unreservedly. These explanations would be delicate and painful. I have stipulated that there shall be none between the parties interested, either verbal or written. Every thing must be done through me as intermediary, who will give no wounds, I hope, to any of you. I am, then, attorney for Sir Richard; and I ask if you will witness with satisfaction his marriage with Mlle. Perez?"

"Yes, yes, certainly! Reply to him at once. Tell him I ask a thousand pardons for having disturbed his household, and that I never will look upon Mme. Brudnel again!"

"He does not require that promise. He seems to be above all jealousy."

"Does he not love her then? Come, did he surely love her when I failed to take her away from him?"

"He loved her, and he loves her, not with the sentiment of an enthusiastic young man, still less with the jealousy of an old libertine. Sir Richard is a chaste man, despite of strong temptations in his past. He loved the child as if she had been his daughter. She afforded him the illusion of paternity. He knew that she was ill long ago, threatened with death if she yielded to the sway of passion. For this reason he has always secluded her in his house, having

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found that the tedium of a convent would kill her as speedily as the enjoyment of liberty. Perhaps no change will happen in their relations. Who knows, and what matters it? Marriage is to her a rehabilitation which she accepts with gladness. She will be Mme. Brudnel, who will not ask to be taken into society, and who will live, by dint of attentions, expedients, and pettings, in agreeable and luxurious retirement. This life of the country and the home is equally essential to Sir Richard, whose health, you know, is quite feeble. I think he has taken the best course, for he has a genuine affection for his charge; and if a little love is mingled with it, his bearing toward her and you, when he found himself betrayed, proves the superiority of his nature."

"Yes, truly, I never expected till now to admire him; but in all this romance, of which he announces to you the end, I get no glimpse of the mysterious person of his daughter. Do you know who she is?"

"I will speak of her hereafter. For the present let us think only of our own plans. You have positively decided not to leave us?"

"Unless Jeannie marries, and I am so unfortunate as to be disagreeable to him who will be her lord."

"Can it be that you were born so jealous that the husband of your sister must be antipathetic to you in advance?"

"I do not think I was born jealous; but I have fared, while yet too young, on deceitful hopes. This Manuela, of whom I dreamed in college, and who, later, has proved so grand a deception to me, has left a leaven of bitterness in me. I will cure myself, now the charm is broken; and, I assure you, I will do my best to be my brother-in-law's best friend."

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"That is well considered; but where do you get your brother-in-law, after all your resolutions, — yours and your sister's, — and crushing love to powder?"

"Was Jeannie in earnest in that? Doesn't she really love any one?"

"If she loved any one besides us, you would know it. No one is more sincere; but are you ready to suffer if she made a choice?"

"Well, yes; you mean that that, too, is selfishness, and I know it so well that I promise you to conquer this bad feeling, if I am going to be put to the proof; but think of the sweet dream of happiness that we might realize if no stranger intruded upon us!"

"And would you have Jeannie sacrificed to us two, renouncing the bliss of motherhood? I would not have that myself, and I hope to see her married. This will, perhaps, be very difficult; but with time, reflection, and patience — hark! she's playing the piano. What tenderness in all her musical thoughts! Should so beautiful and so loving a spirit be condemned to solitude? But this is not the time to think of that. Let it be sufficient for you to know that we have at present no project. It is time for you to read the evening papers. Go at once, so that we can see you again at nine o'clock, as usual."

"I don't care much for the papers. I would as lief rest if you please."

"It is good for you to take the air after dinner; and, as for us, we have to attend to our little household affairs. Go, you will find us here."

I had no desire to go out; I felt that I was becoming more and more domestic; but I had a patient to see. I went out, as on other evenings, only I did not go to the *cafés* and returned earlier than usual.

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Our house was, as I have said, half city, half country. Placed on the height of the faubourgs, in the midst of gardens, on a superb site, whence the view embraced the whole horizon of the Pyrenees, it had two entrances, one on the city road, the other on the fields, through which wound a rather difficult path. I never took this; but this night I chose it, fearing to arrive too soon, and to disturb my mother in her domestic occupations.

The night was very dark. As I approached the little door I saw a man come out, who took two or three steps toward me, then turned suddenly, walked quickly in the opposite direction, and vanished in the darkness. I hastened forward, and found that the door, ordinarily shut at night, was half-open. Going into the garden, I found Jeannie there, walking slowly and as if absorbed in reverie.

"Who just went out?" I inquired.

"I don't know," she answered; "I noticed nothing."

"You must have been much preoccupied. A man must have passed near you. The garden is not so large that you could have failed to see him. He went out this very minute."

"Did you meet him? Was it the gardener?"

"I caught a glimpse of him, but he avoided me; but he did not look like a gardener. Besides, I remember the gardener who comes to attend to the garden occasionally, and who does not come to-day, does not live in the direction taken by this night prowler, and then he would not have left the door open."

"If he has forgotten to shut the door, let us go and shut it," said Jeannie, tranquilly.

I found her in one of those dreamy moods of indifference to external things, in which I had often seen her in former years. This was the first time since my return. I was

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disturbed and anxious. Could I suppose that she kept a secret from my mother, or that my mother had deceived me? I did not dare to recur to the incident, and waited till the next day, determined to keep a watch on Jeannie.

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PART FIFTH.

I.

THE next morning, therefore, instead of going down to the town, I walked in the faubourg, without losing sight of our grounds. No one came, and I heard, almost uninterrupted, the tones of Jeannie's piano. I had forgotten this adventure, which I was about to dismiss as of no importance, when, a week later, as I was studying in my room, I thought I heard a furtive step in the house. It was near midnight, and all the household had retired at eleven o'clock. I feared that my mother was ill. Sometimes she was seized by nervous suffocation, and concealed her sufferings in order not to alarm us. I wanted to take her by surprise, to prevent her from shutting herself in and refusing to answer, and I stole noiselessly down to her chamber. As I paused on the way, the sound of light footsteps and whispered words came from the parlor. I went thither so softly that not a single step of the staircase creaked under my tread. The door of the parlor was not closed, and through the chink I saw Jeannie in the arms of a man whom I could not identify, but who, as well as I could see by the light of a candle placed at one side of the room, seemed to be M. Brudnel. I was reluctant to watch my sister, and hastily ran up to my mother's

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III.

SINCE the world is the world, a man to whom a young and pretty woman confides her heart-troubles, is a man tempted or vanquished. At first I blamed M. Brudnel for his silence, and then I was troubled, and then I was selfish enough to rejoice. It seemed to me that a rupture with Hélène was imminent, and that he had redeemed his liberty to marry only for the purpose of legitimizing some ancient passion, of which Manuela had never been informed. I instituted a sort of rigid inquest, comparing her answers with those of Dolores. I determined that he had never promised marriage, and satisfied myself fully that he had never spoken of love.

There remained the promise that he had really made not to marry any other woman. Could this be regarded as an irrevocable engagement? Did he remember it? Would his conscience make it a duty to sacrifice his life to the caprice of a child who had no legal claim upon him?

There came one moment during that dreadful fortnight, when I found myself utterly disarmed. Manuela grew steadily worse, and I began to fear the access of a serious illness. She would give herself no thought about it, and I scolded her continually quite brutally, but with an interest that more and more enlightened the clairvoyant Dolores. No doubt, when I was not present, she commented on all my words, and forced her mistress to interpret them as involuntary avowals of passion.

One evening when we were alone in the boudoir, I noticed that Manuela smiled at all my reproofs, and looked

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at me with moist eyes, as if I had said to her the tenderest words. I was afraid: I hastened to be bitter in my irony; I think I was even coarse. I know not what language came to my lips. Suddenly I felt in the gloom that enveloped us two willowy arms around my neck.

"You really hate me, then," she said, pressing her cheek against my face.

"Wretched girl, be still!" I cried, "or I shall think" —

"Think what you will," she answered, vehemently, in a passionate voice. "Listen; there is enough of suffering, enough of striving. It is not Richard whom I love: I did love him; I told you so. It must have been true, for I could not invent any thing. I have not mind enough for that; but I no longer remember that love. It is as if it had never been. I laugh at it now to myself. And why should I take it in earnest? It made me commit no wrong, this child-love which has left me pure, and for which I could never reproach myself, since it has preserved me from myself, and lifted me up in my own eyes. Look at me! I am good and gentle, pretty still, perhaps destined to become what I was at fifteen, if a little happiness comes into my life. I never loved any one passionately, and I have belonged to no one. For him who shall love me sincerely I have a fund of affection and passion in reserve. Will you love me? Answer! You do love me: I know it; I see it; I feel it. Your anger, your harshness, your sarcasm, — they are a flame which sprang out from you and embraced me in spite of you, in spite of fate, in spite of myself. One must love or die. Don't deny yourself longer: be as brave as I, who give myself, and own myself conquered."

I resisted firmly. "Be still! For heaven's sake, be still!" I said. "Wait till Sir Richard is here before

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her shoulders and shaking her head, with an unmistakable expression of refusal.

I took the letter to the post; but, at the point of dropping it in the box, I retained it in my hand, and slipped it in my pocket. By going across country, I could deliver it to Antonio Perez myself, as speedily as, perhaps more speedily than, the mail-carrier.

I was too agitated over my sudden resolution to go home, and should have betrayed myself. I struck across the mountain to a little cabin where dwelt a shepherd who was my friend. I asked him to go to my father's as soon as the sun was low, and say that I should not return that night, as some hunters had sent word that they waited for me in the valley of Ossoue. Then I took a bit of bread and some milk, and followed the course of Ossoue for some time; but as soon as the shepherd had lost sight of me I plunged into a lateral ravine, determined to reach the frontier as a bird flies.

My intimate topographical knowledge of the region, and my experience of mountain travel, were quite necessaay for the task of surmounting all obstacles in this way. This suited me. Often had I traversed regions that no other had ventured to essay. I reached the frontier at night. Descending to the first Spanish house, — a humble cabin, — I slept there till early dawn. On this side I knew nothing of the country, but I could speak the half-Spanish *patois* of the neighborhood fluently; and, passing through unfamiliar defiles of the mountain, not less savage than those of the French side, I reached Panticosa about mid-day.

At that time it was a village of wretched huts, shaded by magnificent chestnuts. Its poverty-stricken aspect gave me courage. One enters more confidently a cottage than a palace. Moreover, on my inquiry for the house of An-

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tonio Perez, some one pointed out, at the rear of the hill, a little frame-house in good condition, — the only one in the village, — and I immediately sought it.

I found the master at table, waited upon by a very beautiful girl, who could be no other than his daughter, and I almost fainted. But the steady and unkindly look of Antonio stimulated me to resist the emotion. I presented my letter. Antonio opened and read it like a man who doesn't read writing readily. The beautiful girl in attendance gazed at me with so much self-possession and boldness that I should have lost countenance if I had not thought of turning so as to avoid her eyes. I took advantage of this moment of respite to scrutinize her father.

He was a squat man, broad-shouldered, with crisp hair, fine features, grayish beard, bronzed complexion, and, I must avow it, an expression of cunning and ferocity which belonged to a brigand rather than a smuggler. He inspired me with dislike, even repugnance; and I looked at his daughter, unhesitatingly, this time, resolved to shun her and forget her if she resembled him.

She did not resemble him: she was worse. There lay athwart her unquestionable beauty a look of easy impudence; moreover, she was signally dirty.

Cured of my passion, as if by enchantment, mortified, but relieved of all pain, I waited till my host had finished his reading, and felt more firmly resolved than ever not to let him know who I was.

He seemed satisfied with the intelligence I had brought him. I saw him smile, count his fingers stealthily, then put the letter into the very bottom of his pocket, as something that he did not want to lose. Then he made a sign to his daughter, who left the room, and turning to me, —

"Very well, my boy," he said; "you have done well to

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bring me this; you have gained a glass of my best wine. What's your name?"

"Médard Tosas," I answered.

"Are you from Luz?"

"From its neighborhood."

"And what is your business?"

"I hunt bears."

"So you are brave and skilful, as well as handsome. Come, drink my health as I drink yours."

Manuela had returned, bearing a jug of cordial wine, from which she filled a glass of bluish tint and very dirty. While I gulped down the draught, Perez looked at me maliciously; and, assuming a tone of familiar patronage that made me blush, "I hope, you rascal," he said, smiling, "that you are not a smuggler."

"No, I am not a smuggler," I answered, rising at the same time; "and I do not intend to be one."

"You are right," he replied, with remarkable calmness; "it's a dirty business, and more hazardous than bear-hunting," he added, with an imperceptible touch of contempt.

"It is not the danger that I fear. It is not my habit to be afraid. I did not say that smuggling was a dirty business. I say that I have another line of business, and intend to keep it, — that's all; and so I salute you and the young lady, unless you want to write an answer to the letter I brought you."

"You will tell Jean Bielsa that it is all right. But you must be tired. Won't you eat something, and rest yourself, — at a pinch, sleep under my roof. All things here are at your service."

"No," I answered, "I have business elsewhere. Thanks," — and I started off with a quick step, though I was exhausted with fatigue. I went to dine in a neighboring

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market-town; slept there two hours; and in the evening passed the gate of Boucharo, and spent the night at Gavarnie. The next morning, light as a bird, I descended the mountain on a good road, and reached home in the evening, with ears a little drooping, but with a happy heart and emancipated imagination.

As I had been silent and abstracted for a long time, my mother soon saw that I was cured; and, knowing neither the cause of my disease nor that of my recovery, rejoiced and gave me a warm reception. I pretended that cramp in the stomach, to which I had been subject for a year, had suddenly and permanently ceased. My explanation was not wholly untrue.

Some days later, I was with Jeannie on the garden-seat, waiting for supper. I was in high spirits, and played with a little bird that she had reared.

"You are pleasant at last," she said. "You are, then, no longer in love?"

"And do you know what it is to be in love?" I answered. "You know nothing about it, and speak at random."

"I know very well," she replied, "that to be in love is to be always thinking of one person that we prefer to all others."

"Did the nuns teach you that?"

"No; but my mates have told me it."

"But you scorn such things, — you, who won't marry."

"I don't know. I'm fourteen: that's the age for making up one's mind."

"Oh, you have time enough yet!"

"Listen: if you will promise not to marry, I will do the same."

"Why? What does it matter to you whether I marry or not?"

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chamber. There was a light there; I knocked, and found her dressing herself.

"You know, then," I said, with some agitation, "that there is some one in the house?"

"Yes, some one whom we did not expect to-night, and who has, no doubt, something important to tell us."

"Some one who is alone with Jeannie in the parlor; do you know him?"

"Certainly," answered my mother, quite calm; "she got ready first. Come, be tranquil; all this is quite natural; you shall be told what it means. Go up to your room: you will bother us."

"So you keep a secret from me?"

"You know it well."

"I thought there was none any longer. M. Brudnel" —

"Well, M. Brudnel?"

"It is he who is here!"

"What if it is he? I do not wish you to see him yet; do as I tell you; go up to your room, unless you are still jealous of Manuela Perez, and mean to oppose her marriage."

"You know very well that I have quite other intentions; but it seems strange, and — permit me to say it — it seems revolting that M. Brudnel should come mysteriously, like a Spanish lover. In fact, I think it improper and intolerable, his embracing Jeannie as if she were his daughter or his sister. What means this sudden intimacy? Does he come often? No doubt it was he whom I saw" —

"Don't bother us with your suspicions!" said my mother, laughing; "it is not permitted in our house. Go along! obey your mother, sir!" She kissed me tenderly, and went downstairs, leaving me stupefied.

I remained where I was, in my mother's chamber, rest-

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ing my elbows on the window, which I threw open to keep myself from suffocating, with my head in my hands, a prey to inconceivable agitation.

What was going on within me? Why this rage? I hated Sir Richard with all the strength of my soul. Never had I been jealous of Manuela as I was of Jeannie. "Is it quite natural?" I asked myself. "Jeannie is my sister, that is to say, my very honor, and not content with having regained his mistress from me, he comes to rob me, even in my own house, of the ideal of purity, which it is my right and duty to defend. He a chaste man! My mother is a mere child in this affair. Thus a woman may be too honorable, and sin by excess of virtue. Can she believe that this sophisticated old man kisses Jeannie paternally, when she admits herself that he was too wild in his youth? What does all this mean? Why does Jeannie, always so reserved, throw her arms around the neck of a stranger, when she hardly gives her hand to old friends of the family, — when even I dare to kiss her only on the forehead? And this mystery! Why does he come at night, secretly? Jeannie was with him in the garden, the other night, and to-night she went down first, and embraced him without witnesses. She loves him then? Is she the one he is to marry? Do they deceive me? Do they leave me, for consolation, the problematical fidelity of Manuela? But all this cannot be settled without me, and my mother requires a patience far too blind. I will not permit Jeannie, duped by her own passionlessness, or the airy fancies of her imagination, to be seduced, perhaps, by name and wealth, to become, in the flower of her youth, the companion, the nurse, of an old man. No: I will not have it, I will not suffer it, unless," — a dull flash crossed my eyes, — "unless she is his daughter!"

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A thousand vague recollections thronged upon my mind. She was, she said once, neither my father's nor my mother's daughter. Yet I had seen unimpeachable documentary evidence. Cecile Jeannie, born of the legitimate marriage of my parents. Besides, why should this family secret be concealed from me? Whatever it may be, I accept it; but if there is none, — if Jeannie is my sister, — I will not permit her to dispose of herself without consulting me, and, quitting the window, I was going down to the parlor, at the risk of offending my mother, when the door was opened beneath me; I glided to the hand-rail of the staircase, and heard Jeannie say in a whisper in the vestibule, — "Yes, yes, my father, we will surely go: count on us. Kiss her for me."

My mother and Jeannie conducted Sir Richard to the garden. I went up to my room, and threw myself on my bed. Since they could dissimulate with me, I could dissimulate too, and seem to be ignorant of the secret that they did not deign to reveal to me.

But, instead of sleeping, I again took my head in my hands, and fell into painful perplexities. Jeannie, born of the legitimate marriage of my parents, and yet Sir Richard's daughter, must be the daughter of my mother, — whose fault had been condoned by her husband, — the fault of this holy woman, object of unbounded veneration! No, I cried, rising from my bed, and stretching out my arms, it is not, it cannot be; and yet how many probabilities, painfully sifted, make it seem to be! The great love of my mother for Jeannie; her emotion when I told her that Sir Richard was my patron; the intimacy which has arisen between them, their correspondence, which I am not permitted to read, their mysterious meetings, — I could not stay in my room; I went down to my mother,

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who had again retired, but was still awake. I fell on my knees at her bed, which I wet with my tears. "I am mad," I said; "I am desperate; forgive me! tell me that Jeannie is not your daughter!"

"Ah," she said, touching my hair, with a fond smile, "you have guessed at last?"

"Thanks!" I cried, covering her hands with kisses; "if you knew how happy you make me!"

"I feared, indeed, to give you pain! whence comes your joy?"

"You ask me!"

"Must I guess? You knew something, and you did not love Jeannie as your sister."

"Yes, my mother! I swear to you, yes. I knew nothing; I did not guess: I loved Jeannie with as holy an affection as I give you."

"Truly! then — I do not understand," said my mother, simply.

She could not admit to herself that I had suspected her. I hastened to divert her clear vision, and spoke of my foolish imaginings as to a projected marriage between Jeannie and M. Brudnel, and I acknowledged that I had surprised the secret of the tie which united them.

"Then," replied my mother, "you know that we yield to his request. We go to-morrow to witness his marriage to Manuela. I have had to conquer and silence some presentiments that lingered with me; but Jeannie, who knows nothing, and must know nothing, of your adventure, is disposed to love her father's wife."

"Her mother, then, is dead?"

"She died a few years after bringing Jeannie into the world at Bordeaux."

"Was it not?" —

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"Fanny Ellingston."

"Marquise de Mauville: I remember the tomb where you prayed with Jeannie. In that minute, I thought I understood, and Jeannie surely understood. Why did you deceive us for so long? I was old enough to keep a secret."

"It was my duty, on the contrary, to shut out from your mind every suspicion of the truth."

"Why?"

"Because you would have fallen in love with Jeannie, and her future does not belong to me."

"I should have loved her, you say? Yes, it is possible, who knows? I was so jealous of her just now. But tell me, then — can you tell me as to her real situation? Can M. Brudnel acknowledge her, adopt her, and declare himself her father? Was she not recorded in the public register as the daughter of yourself and my father? He has no right over her; she remains my sister; she *is* my sister according to law."

"Let her be your sister," answered my mother. "As far as Sir Richard is concerned, let us await the result of his reflections."

"What reflections? He can declare nothing without exposing himself to serious dangers. No one has a right to substitute one child for another; for my studies lead me to believe that my true sister having died in birth, Jeannie took her place, and my poor father, who had but little respect for the law, had a certificate of birth recorded instead of a certificate of death. If he did this I don't wish you to be arrested as an accomplice in such an irregularity, and in that case I forbid Sir Richard to do any act of paternal authority in my family."

"Poor Sir Richard!" said my mother, "I see it will be

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very difficult to reconcile you with him. Whatever course he may take, you always find a cause of enmity toward him. Yet I hope there will be no open antagonism between you; and, till further orders, I will confer with him alone."

"As you wish; but tell him for me that I forbid him to expose you to suspicion or to an unpleasant duty. He can never acknowledge Jeannie, and I forbid him to try to do it. I know and I invoke the law: Jeannie belongs to us. I will be her brother and her protector toward and against all. I object to her attending Manuela's marriage, because I would not have Manuela a sharer in so grave a secret. She would not understand it; and would speak of it to Dolores, who would babble it to everybody: women hold legal authority very cheap, and you yourself do not seem ever to have understood the serious consequences of your sublime devotion to the Marquise de Mauville."

"Come!" said my mother, "I must quiet you in order to prevent profitless and painful conflicts with M. Brudnel; it is too soon, much sooner than I would have it; I would choose to have you still believe that insurmountable barriers separate you and Jeannie; but you drag the truth from me. I do not wish you to suppose that your father perpetrated at my instigation a crime so grave as that of deceiving the municipal authorities. You have seen the fully authentic certificate of birth of your sister Jeannie, who died in birth; I have not shown you the certificate of her death, — that's all; but there is one, and no civil officer has been hoodwinked. Jeannie, the daughter of my friend Fanny Ellingston, was taken to the foundling hospital, whence she was withdrawn to be placed at nurse. Such was the wish of her mother, who would not have her exposed to the just indignation of her husband. Circum-

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stances were such that he could not doubt her fault, and he was a dreadful man, capable of any thing; but, to make you understand the necessities which I endured and accepted, I must tell the story of my poor friend and that of Richard Brudnel."

"I know the beginning," I said. "You have often spoken of it to my father in my presence. Fanny Ellingston was a penniless orphan, a relative of the Marquise de Mauville, who brought her up with her own children and you; the young marquis fell in love with Fanny and married her against the will of his mother, who wanted him to make a more advantageous match. This marriage took place at Mauville, in the suburbs of Marmande, and soon after you left that country to marry my father at Bordeaux."

"Up to that point," continued my mother, "you are well informed; but I must tell you one of the reasons which led me to marry. My situation at Mauville had become painful.

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II.

"FANNY did not love her husband. She did wrong to marry him out of spite. She had known and loved Sir Richard Brudnel during several weeks that he had visited the Château de Mauville. Sir Richard was then a brilliant and attractive young man, too much spoiled by his success in society not to be a little frivolous. When he went back to England, he had given rise to hopes which were not realized for Miss Ellingston. He did not return. The marquis urged her to decide in his favor. She yielded.

"I did not approve her conduct. I foresaw great troubles. The marquis was furiously jealous. She was imprudence itself. She had always loved Richard, and she loved him still. She wrote him letters which were then quite innocent, and consequently useless and dangerous. She wished me to serve as intermediary and confidante; but I refused. She thought I was too scrupulous, and lamented that she had not my love as I had hers. I felt that she was ruining herself, and that she could ruin me, too, by making me the accomplice of a questionable intimacy. I declare, also, that I was indignant at Fanny's light conduct. She told me, in a fit of anger, that I was jealous of her, because, like all the women in the house, even her mother-in-law, I was in love with Sir Richard. There was, perhaps, some truth in this notion; but, so far as it concerned me, it was absolutely false. In spite of my youth, I was a sensible girl; and, of all the women in the house, I was the only one whom Sir Richard had not tried to make himself agreeable to. When Fanny thus wounded me your father loved me,

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and I was attached to him. We went to Bordeaux with my father, and were married there. There we had the grief of losing that excellent father. He left us a little property, that my husband thought he could increase by commercial enterprises; so we took a modest house near Bordeaux. There you were born, and there I had three years of unalloyed happiness.

"After these peaceful years came great sorrows. I was joyfully looking forward to the moment when I hoped to have a daughter, when I received from Fanny the following letter: 'I have done wrong toward you. The terrible evils that you predicted have been realized. My evil destiny is accomplished. I am about to become a mother, and the absence of my husband at the date of my error renders vain any attempt to deceive him. Come to me, — hasten, my Adèle! Thus far I have concealed my situation; but, in fifteen or twenty days, if R. does not come, and you abandon me, I am lost. I have offended you, — a reason the more for a soul like yours. P. S. I walk every evening, at the end of the park, under the cedars.'

"I wanted to start at once for Mauville; by steamboat, the journey was neither long nor tedious. Bielsa objected. 'Your presence,' he said, 'would only strengthen suspicions, if any there are, and there must be. The marquis is too suspicious, the dowager is too malevolent, the sisters-in-law are too jealous, for it to be otherwise. The inevitable crisis must come outside the château. I will bring away the young marquise, will carry her, if it is necessary. I will conduct her hither, and conceal her near by. Let me do it. If any thing can be done, I will do it, but alone, not with you.' He started, after giving me detailed and precise instructions.

"He had a great heart, your father, the smuggler. We

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had good reason to love him. Resolute, active, prudent, and intrepid, he brought his undertaking to a successful issue. He did not show himself at the château. They would have readily recognized the Moreno there: that was his old shepherd's name. He watched for Fanny, joined her in the evening in the park, and easily persuaded her to flee with him. The marquis was absent for three days. Fanny had had a bitter quarrel with her mother-in-law that very evening. 'Take this for a pretext,' said your father. 'Run home, write and leave a letter, in which say that the hatred of the marquise drives you away, and that she will never again see you alive. Nothing more, nothing less. They will think of suicide: they will search for you around Mauville. You will have time to reach Bordeaux before they get on your track.'

"'And then?' said Fanny.

"'Then we will see. Above all, don't carry any thing, neither goods nor money. One doesn't make preparations when about to kill one's self.'

"In a quarter of an hour, Madame de Mauville, having followed Bielsa's advice, escaped with him, covered with an outer garment which he had taken from our shop, and which gave her the appearance of a peasant. He had also brought thick shoes, so that the prints of her little feet might not be recognized. He took care, too, to efface her first foot-marks and his own on the sand of the park. On foot they reached the not distant banks of the Garonne, where they took a boat. At Podensac, a short distance from Bordeaux, they landed. There I was waiting for them, and I took them to the house of Ramonde, a good midwife, my husband's elder sister. She was a trustworthy, devoted, and skilful person, bound, too, by her calling to absolute secrecy. My husband had taken account of all chances that favored his plan.

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"Fanny was not very much fatigued, and brought Jeannie into the world two hours later. Strong and courageous, full of hope and sweet illusions, she thought she was saved. Her child, beautiful and perfect in form, was taken to the hospital, recorded, as born of parents unknown, under the name of Jeannie, but instantly brought back and borne away by a good nurse whom Ramonde recommended in her neighborhood.

"A week later, Fanny was strong enough to come to our house, where she passed for one of our relatives. Then her plans for the future had to be discussed. She could not return to her husband; she expected that Sir Richard, as soon as he knew she was able to travel, would come to take her to America. He knew her situation, and had gone to get the money needed for the voyage; for he was straitened just at that time; but, no doubt, he would get it, and would be sure to take Fanny away, as he had promised.

"'But where will he find you?' Bielsa asked her.

"'We are going to write to him.'

"'Where?'

"'Ah, I don't know; he went to England; he was to have returned and to lie hidden in the environs of Mauville; but, as he did not appear on the appointed day, I wrote to your wife to come to my aid.'

"'That was ten days ago. He has been delayed, then. Perhaps he is still in England; perhaps he is on the way. Where did you write to him?'

"'Oh, everywhere! every time he gave me a new address. For some time he has not remained in one place. I know he is seeking in all quarters for money to take us to America and support us there!'

"I ventured to say to Fanny that it was not necessary

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to count absolutely on Sir Richard's promises: he had already failed once —

"'Silence!' she cried; 'he did not love me then as he loved me later, and, besides, he made no positive promises. Now I count on him absolutely. Let us write to him. I will write ten letters, if it is necessary, to all the addresses that he gave me, besides that of his sister, Lady C——.'"

"'If he kept his word,' said Jean Bielsa, 'he must be now near Mauville. Can't you tell us where he used to conceal himself in order to see you secretly?'

"'He used to stay, disguised, with a charcoal-burner who lived three leagues from us;' and she gave us directions, clear enough, this time. 'Don't write,' said your father. 'I'll go; but first reflect!'

"'On what?' asked Fanny, in astonishment.

"'Oh, you must reflect, I say. Your slip is a thing done, covered, saved. You have a daughter to love: she will live far from you; but I will watch over her; I answer for it, she shall be happy and well-bred. Time and good behavior efface suspicions. One day that you may hasten by your will, — you will come where you can take her to yourself without any one's knowing who she is. To that end, you must return to your husband; say that you wanted to die, but had not wicked courage enough; and that you came to find me, your old friend. The alarm caused by your disappearance will force your mother-in-law to better courses; and as for your husband, notwithstanding his violence, he loves you still, and, with patience and submission, you may gain great power over him. Life is always possible to whoever does his duty. You must break with M. Brudnel, — believe me, you must: you must even conceal from him the existence of this child.'

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"'No, no!' cried Fanny; 'I wish, on the contrary, that he should know of it. I thought I might die in childbed, and I wrote him a letter. Then I wrote another from Ramonde's house to tell him of Jeannie's birth.'

"'It was terribly imprudent. Give me these letters!'

"'There are others here. These are all that Richard has written me. They are the only things I brought away from Mauville.'

"'Give it to me; it must be burned.'

"'No, it isn't necessary to burn it,' said Bielsa. 'We need not break the only tie between Jeannie and her father. It is her right, this child's; and the time may come when she would reproach us for depriving her of it. It's only a moral right, I admit; but such rights are sometimes worth as much as written ones. Give me all these letters, madame: I promise on my honor to take care of them.'

"Fanny gave my husband the packet of letters that she kept concealed on her person, and he placed them in the front pocket of his coat. It was a providential inspiration, for some one was coming up the stairs to our little room. Bielsa thought he was wanted at the shop, and was about to open the door to look down to the landing. He had only time to turn to us with an energetic gesture, when we heard him cry, with a clear and joyous voice: 'Ah! one couldn't come more timely, Monsieur le Marquis. I was going to write to you, and we were just speaking of you. Come in, come in! By my faith, you are welcome!' And he stepped aside to admit the Marquis de Mauville, who appeared at the door with pale face and set teeth. Fanny threw herself on a lounge, and shut her eyes that they might not encounter his.

"'No,' said the marquis, 'my arrival is not timely, you know very well.'

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"'Pardon me,' answered your father, with his bold good-humor; 'the surprise — we were just saying, 'If the marquis should come, he would be very much pleased, and Madame la Marquise also.' And, not giving any one time to interrupt him: 'You have been very anxious, have you not? You believed there had been a dreadful misfortune! Thank God, it was nothing but a heartache, — a blow on the head. Madame says that your mother does not love her: she has seen it; but that's no reason for killing herself. She thought of God, and returned to herself: she was saved. She came to seek my wife; and for a week we have teased her to return to her home, — we going with her; or that she would permit us to write to you. She would not consent. Faith, she lost her wits!'

"'You should have written, though,' said the marquis; when Bielsa quickly interrupted, —

"'Yes, we ought to have written; but she threatened to run away from us, and hide herself elsewhere. My wife thought it was better to accomplish our object by persuasion, and she was just yielding as you entered.'

"'Is it true, madame,' said the marquis to his wife, 'that you consented to return to your home?'

"'Yes, sir,' answered Fanny, whom my wife had inspirited, and who saw that by refusing she destroyed us with herself. Then rising, she added: 'I am ready to accompany you.'

"'Are you in such a condition that you can go at once?' he asked, doubtfully.

"'Why shouldn't she be?' replied my husband. 'Madame the Marquise has had sorrow; she wept every day: but, thanks to God and my wife's kind care, she has not been ill. Ah! you look about our poor room. It is not very fine, but it is convenient; and soon it will be better fur-

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nished. We had but one child; we are going to have two.'

"Bielsa said this while following with sharp eyes the gaze of M. de Mauville, which was fixed on the cradle intended for my second child. Then he looked at me, and saw that my husband told the truth; for though Fanny had succeeded in concealing her situation, it would have been impossible for me to hide mine. He seemed calm, and assumed an air of feigned gayety, to say that it was not necessary to separate the marquise so abruptly from her devoted friends. Then he said, addressing Bielsa: 'I want to speak to you.'

"They went out together, and the marquis, crumpling a paper in his hands, gave it to Bielsa, saying, haughtily: 'Where is the child?'

"Bielsa saw that it was a letter from Sir Richard that the marquis had intercepted. It was vain to hope to deceive him on all points. 'The child died at birth,' he answered.

"'What declaration was made about it?'

"'Parents unknown.'

"'Who carried off the marquise? Who brought her here?'

"'I.'

"'To let her meet her lover?'

"'Oh, surely not! — to save her honor and your own.'

"'Moreno,' said the marquis, taking a purse from his pocket, 'you have served me well, and I love you. You have just done me a great favor. Can I count on your silence and your wife's?'

"Bielsa rejected the purse with so energetic a gesture that it fell to the ground, and the marquis was forced to pick it up himself, your father not deigning even to touch it.

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"'I'm fond of money that I earned by my own labor,' he said; 'but not of that which is a mark of dishonor. If you do not rely on my discretion, it is because you have mistaken my character. In this case, you would do wrong to pay me, for we do not place confidence in those who accept such conditions. Besides I have no conditions to accept; it is my part to make them. I will be silent, then, on condition that you will pardon your wife, and treat her kindly.'

"'At this moment,' said the marquis, with a strange smile which Bielsa did not fail to notice, 'I can forget the past, if madame accepts the present.'

"They returned to us. While they were absent, Fanny, abandoned to despair, was violently agitated. I could calm her only by saying that she could run away again, and lay her plans more carefully.

"'Madame,' said the marquis, as he came in, 'all is explained and accepted. As it is unpleasant for you to live with my mother, we will establish ourselves elsewhere; besides, Mauville could not but revive memories painful to you. One of our friends recently perished by a violent death. Sir Richard Brudnel, your fellow-countryman, while crossing a ditch in the park, was killed by the discharge of his own gun.'

"And, stooping toward her, he added in a low voice, — but your father overheard: 'and so Sir Richard's child shall die if he ever prowls around me. Now I pardon, that all may be forgotten.'

"He had added these words, struck, as we were, by the expression of Fanny's face. She did not tremble, but her eyes became fixed, her face livid. He held out his hand to her; but she did not raise her arm, and stood motionless, frozen: she was dead!

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"We could not believe it; but all our efforts were vain. The marquis became mad in his alarm. 'Shut her eyes,' he cried, 'those dreadful eyes that will not quit my own!'

"He departed, and did not appear in his château till a fortnight later, — deranged, furious, when he was not prostrate and melancholy. Two years later he perished, having thrown himself from one of the towers of his château.

"As to us, terrified and despairing, we appealed in vain to a physician, — one of our friends. Nothing could recall Fanny to life; she was stricken dead, slain by one word of that outraged husband who thought he was pardoning when he killed her.

"Several days later I brought into the world a dying child, who received the name of Jeannie and lived only a few hours. Broken down with grief and fatigue, I felt a horror of my house, and was eager to change it for another, when your father was forced to tell me of a new disaster. We were compelled to abandon our business which had absorbed our resources without yielding us the smallest income! After paying for the modest stone that we had set up at Fanny's grave, and which no one noticed, we had left scarcely enough to enable us to seek work in a country where living was cheap. Your father had already formed a project which he confided to me. He was not cast down or discouraged. He swore to save us all three from trouble; for Jeannie passed for our daughter, and we were determined to take her, with her nurse, no matter where we went. We thought Sir Richard was dead, and that she was therefore an orphan.

"We started as soon as I was able to travel, and lived two years at Saint-Jean-de-Luz, where I practised the calling of a dressmaker, and your father began, without my knowledge, those operations which you know of, and

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of which I do not know the extent. We could avert destitution; but we were very poor when he brought us here, where Jeannie easily passed for our daughter, since no one knew us. We knew not what had become of the marquis. I was always afraid of him on behalf of that poor child. I was reassured only when I learned of his death from a pedler whom I had often seen at Mauville. I inquired about M. Brudnel. She could tell me nothing about him, — did not remember ever seeing him. I asked, if two years ago, some one was not killed by accident in the park of Mauville. She had never heard such an event spoken of.

"Then I thought that the marquis had boasted of a crime which he had not committed, and that Sir Richard had really abandoned Fanny. Yet I begged your father to ascertain the truth. We had preserved the clews to the place where he used to hide in the environs of Mauville. Bielsa went thither, and succeeded in gaining the charcoal-burner's confidence, who gave him the following particulars: —

"He had, indeed, afforded an asylum on several occasions to the handsome English gentleman, and had even accompanied him and his valet, at night, to the foot of the park of Mauville; for their rendezvous was very dangerous. The charcoal-burner did not know whether his guest had an intrigue with the young marquise or with one of her sisters-in-law. The Englishman was away a long time. One night in June, 1825, about two weeks before Fanny's flight, — it was, in fact, the time when she expected him, — he returned mysteriously, and the charcoal-burner helped John, the valet, to make all arrangements for an elopement. That night they repaired to the edge of the park, at some distance from the cedars. The Englishman

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wished to go forward alone, but scarcely had he entered the enclosure when the report of a gun was heard. John darted forward, and the charcoal-burner followed him. At their approach the murderer fled. The Englishman was stretched on the ground, and apparently dead. His two companions raised him and placed him in the carriage made ready for the elopement. Reaching the bank of the Garonne, the valet made the charcoal-burner alight, and gave him a purse of gold, when the carriage disappeared in the darkness. Never, from that minute, had he heard a word of the handsome English gentleman, and he had never dared to ask about him.

"After this we gave up all hope — it might as well be called fear — of seeing Jeannie reclaimed by her father. We loved this child as we should have loved the one I had lost. Bielsa called her, you remember, the daughter of his heart. In the sequel certain chances brought us to know that M. Brudnel had reappeared in London, after a long and severe illness, and afterwards set out on a prolonged tour."

When my mother had finished her story, I asked her to tell me how Sir Richard had discovered his daughter, and why he loved her so fondly, after having willingly ignored her existence for so long a time. I saw in this sudden tenderness more of caprice than of true paternal affection. Besides, how did it happen that my name had not struck him when we became acquainted at Bergonz? That would have been a good opportunity to inform himself at least as to the particulars of the marquise's death, and he should have gone instantly to interrogate the person who had been so devoted to her.

"There was a very simple reason for this," said my mother. "It is that M. Brudnel, who had known Adèle

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Moessart, daughter of the steward of Mauville, had never known Mme. Bielsa. If, on his return to the château, after my departure, any one had told him that I had married Moreno, the shepherd, he had no reason for seeking any further information; and besides, seeing that the recollection of me was painful to Fanny, he avoided questioning her about me. He little thought that, in a desperate emergency, it was I to whom she turned.

"So your name reminded him of nothing, apprised him of nothing; and when I told you to speak of me to him, which you were very slow to do, for what reason I don't know, I did not know if he retained a sweet or bitter remembrance of his tragic love.

"I must tell you now why, amid the terrible events of which he was the victim, he was ignorant of the circumstances of Fanny's death and the birth of her child. Borne away in a dying state by his faithful servant, he was received and secretly nursed in a country house near Bordeaux; so that when poor Fanny expired in my arms, he was very near her and also near to death.

"Yet the wound itself was not very serious, though the ball had passed quite through his shoulder; but the excitement of his flight, and moral exasperation, induced such an attack of nervous fever that his life was often despaired of. He sank at last into utter prostration, from which he awoke only to ask John for news of Fanny. John deceived in order to soothe him; and as soon as he found him well enough to quit his retirement, made him believe that Mme. de Mauville was waiting for him in London. He got him on board ship as speedily as he could. John wished, at any cost, to withdraw Richard from that fatal neighborhood, where the marquis's vengeance would ever be threatening him.

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"Arriving at London, Richard hastened to his sister to get tidings of Fanny; but, instead of a letter from her, he found a letter announcing her death. Moreover, Lady C——, who was an intimate friend of the dowager Marquise de Mauville, had received, two months before, a letter from that lady, in which she stated, in a tone of freezing consternation, that her daughter-in-law, far advanced in pregnancy, having, very imprudently, and against the writer's wishes, gone to Bordeaux to do some shopping, died there, with the child she was carrying. The dowager raised no doubt as to the legitimacy of this child. Probably she chose to avoid a new cause of antagonism between her son and Sir Richard. The latter was wholly deceived by this version of the case, which he could not verify, and which had all the probabilities on its side. As the dowager added, in a postscript, that her son was crazed by grief, Richard saw in that phrase an appeal to his generosity, and resolved to forego his revenge. He even convinced himself that the marquis thought he was firing at a robber poaching in his park, that he had never doubted Fanny's fidelity, and that that unhappy woman had died by accident before the birth of her child.

"Overwhelmed with grief, he took long journeys, which have diverted and sustained him through many years. He has told me the truth as to his real feelings in the past. He had loved Fanny with more ardor than tenderness; but, from the day when she gave him the hope of becoming a father, he had consecrated himself wholly to her. He had pledged to his sister his future freedom in order to obtain from her means to take Fanny away, and to secure for her in America a comfortable subsistence, with her child, whom he hoped to educate. After the catastrophe, his life had been a long remorse; and he had loved no other woman.

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In the purchase of Manuela from her father, he saw nothing but the opportunity to do an act of expiation, and afterwards, as I have told you, and as he often says himself, the illusion of paternity.

"It remains to tell you how Sir Richard recognized Jeannie as his daughter while he was still quite ignorant of the facts. As soon as you recalled my name to him, he resolved to see me in order to gain some particulars as to Fanny's last hours. He did not think that I had been present then; but I might know some circumstances of which he had been necessarily ignorant. He had not dared to question any one else, fearing to cast suspicion on the memory of this unfortunate woman.

"Therefore, as soon as he had paid the last offices to the remains of his sister, he started for Bordeaux, but not without making a *détour* to see me. Chance would have it that Jeannie should be alone in the house. He was so struck by her likeness to Fanny that, for a minute, he thought he beheld Fanny herself, and stammered out some incoherent words. Jeannie would have thought him crazy if she had not been herself profoundly agitated. A long time ago, she had discovered or guessed the secret of her birth. Romantic by nature, she had always expected her father as a kind of good genius; and every new face of a certain age had always excited her more or less. I arrived in time to relieve their common embarrassment. I knew Sir Richard instantly, and made a sign to Jeannie to withdraw.

"Then, seizing my hands, Sir Richard cried: 'Fanny! that young girl! Explain this likeness! Tell me of Fanny Ellingston! Poor, dear Fanny!'

"I meant to make no revelations till I had learned the true state of his feelings, and the causes of his apparent

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neglect. When I was sure of him, I told him the truth, and gave him his letters to Fanny, together with those she had written him from Ramonde's house. I showed him the record of his daughter's birth and that of the death of mine; but he needed not these proofs to confirm my words.

"You see now that you have no reason to fear the authority of Sir Richard over Jeannie. He can neither acknowledge nor adopt her without allowing the mystery of her birth to be guessed. She is, and always will be, ours."

"Alas, not so much as you think," I answered, sadly. "See how infatuated she is with this romantic and fatal father; and, as on the whole, she is free, she can follow him and call him father in a foreign land. I think she will prefer him to us very soon."

"Not to me," said my mother; "since Jeannie has known her own history, her affection for me has been even stronger: we never shall part."

"But I told you, and I have a presentiment that it will be found true, that you will follow wherever she wills, and I shall be left alone. I could not go with you: M. Brudnel would not have me near Manuela."

My mother tried to soothe me; but she was tired, and had only a few hours for sleep, the night being far advanced. I left her, saying that I loved her better than I had ever loved her; but in the bottom of my heart I bore away a sadness that she could not dispel.

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III.

THE next day she started for Montpellier with Jeannie, after having told me in a few words that neither Manuela nor any one else in the world would know any thing of Jeannie's history. My mother had simply promised to witness the marriage, as a mere spectator, and without having herself or Jeannie known to Manuela. M. Brudnel only insisted that his daughter should see the face of his wife that she might then consent or refuse to see her intimately thereafter, according to the degree of sympathy with which the latter inspired her. Jeannie determined in advance to love Manuela. The precaution was, therefore, quite useless. I thought I could see that Sir Richard feared that in the future some doubt might be cast on a marriage, as to which so much had already been aroused. He did not wish that any one should be able to say to his daughter: "Are you sure they are married?"

My family would be absent only a few days. I tried to divert myself by study and walking; but I was overborne and almost prostrated by a profound melancholy. If Vianne could have seen me now, he would perhaps have charged me with regretting Manuela, and yet I could have sworn to him that I did not think of her. I thought only of Jeannie, and could not understand why this thought was so painful. As she was to continue to live just as before, there was no reason why we should not always live together. My brotherly title was sacred in her eyes, since she had shown a warmer affection for me after she knew she was not my sister. This condition of things gave

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promise of quiet and calm happiness for the future. As to the fear of seeing her taken away by her father, it was now to me only an ill-founded apprehension, and did not account for the grief and kind of jealousy that I felt with reference to her.

I was unwilling to descend to the depths of my thoughts. In the case of Manuela I admitted that I had been rash; but Jeannie was not Manuela. A being so pure, so great, so long the centre of my respect and religion, she could not inspire me with emotions of the same kind, and, indeed, my sufferings were those of a heart moved to its depths. It is, perhaps, only brotherly friendship, I said to myself; but there was a shade of something more in it: the world alone is between us, and we feel free in our affections. If it is forbidden to us to belong to one another, and we esteem one another too much to complain of it, I know now, that Jeannie has always loved me as I love her, since my return home: could she always be content with so narrow and barren a sentiment? My mother wishes her to be married: it is difficult to conceive that Jeannie would never wish to be. For my part, I ought to wish her to know the supreme joys of family life; then, of course, her husband and her children will be all in all to her. And I found myself, not a prey to the tortures of sensual jealousy, but with my heart so torn that my cheeks were scalded by flowing tears.

The truth, as I now see it, is that I loved Jeannie with the whole strength of my being; but my love was, as it were, impregnated and sanctified by my habit of loving her with a brotherly affection.

My mother had fixed the day of their return. The day passed, and I expected them in vain. I returned to the house, very sad, saying to myself that M. Brudnel had

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detained them, that Jeannie wanted to attach herself to Manuela, in order to please her father, and would remain several days longer with them; but would the secret of Jeannie's birth, of which I was so jealous, for the sake of my mother's honor, would it be betrayed, that is, bruited?

Next day the postman brought me a letter from my mother, which I read with eagerness and amazement.

"We delay our departure till to-morrow; but I do not wish you to pass a day of anxiety, and I avail myself of an hour's leisure to inform you of the strange event which has just happened in the tumultuous life of R. B.

"We reached Montpellier in good health: your sister innocently delighted at the prospect of witnessing a wedding; I a little troubled by so great a sacrifice to conventionalities or to scruples which I thought well founded, though not so imperious as they seemed to R. B. I had told him as much: there was no time to tell him again. He came to see us a minute, in the evening, at the hotel where we stopped, and told us that every thing was ready for the morrow. It would be a marriage, not a wedding, for immediately after the ceremony the pair would take a post-chaise to return to the *châlet* which R. B. had hired in our neighborhood. Only he desired to invest the marriage with a little pomp. He had therefore invited his acquaintances, the bride would have an exquisite toilette, and a splendid equipage would take them to the Protestant church.

"At five o'clock in the morning we were aroused by B., who begged us to dress ourselves with all speed. 'Come to my house,' he said: 'leave your luggage here. I will talk with you at home: my carriage waits for you. Then he left us abruptly.

"He lived in a fine house that he had hired, a kilometre

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from the city. We reached there a minute behind Sir Richard, who had come and returned on horseback.

"He conducted us to his apartment and said: 'No one here knows you: you can pass for friends or relatives, — it matters little; you will be supposed to have come at my request, to take care of Manuela very seriously ill.'

"Jeannie started up to go to her instantly; but R. B. stopped her by saying: 'Don't seek her; it is useless; she is not here; she will never come back; she does not deserve forgiveness; she fled this night with Dolores, and there's the letter she left for me.'

"He spoke with perfect tranquillity, and with unaltered countenance. He showed us Manuela's letter which I transcribe literally: —

'No, no, I will no longer abuse your paternal goodness: you cannot love me, and I should be contemptible if I took further advantage of your sublime generosity. I go with him who gives me love with marriage, and I think I do my duty toward you. I mean to prove to you that my gratitude is boundless, my respect and filial tenderness unchangeable.'

"'She departed so secretly,' continued R. B., that no one saw her, and no one knows how she left the house with her maid. By accident John, who had been ordered to awake her, discovered her absence at daybreak. Saying nothing to any one, he brought me the letter which was on Manuela's bureau. We have shut up her room, and forbidden any one to approach it; madame is believed to be very ill: I have sent for M. Vianne, who will, no doubt, arrive, while you are helping me to write to all who have been notified or invited, that my bride has been seized by a sudden and severe illness, and that the marriage has been postponed for some days. In a few

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days I shall probably be the laughing-stock of the town. No matter: let us so manage things that from this point I shall be only the legend. Stay with me to-day and to-morrow; you will see no one; John alone shall wait upon you. My other servants will think that madame is in her room; her manner of life gives color to such a theory: the day after to-morrow we will all start before daylight, and, it will be believed that, by the orders of Dr. Vianne, we have taken Manuela to the sea-shore.'

"Jeannie was uneasy at Sir Richard's presence of mind. As for myself, I guessed that, though he was pained and astonished, he felt as if relieved from a great burden and restored to his former dignity.

"We wrote all the notes; he signed, and the postman delivered them. He had sent away all the servants, except John, to the mayor's office, to the church, everywhere where they would be needed, not forgetting or neglecting any thing. We waited for M. Vianne in order to concert measures with him, to save appearances; but we did not see him. Some one came to tell us that he had gone in the night to see a patient in a critical case, that perhaps he would have to perform an operation, and probably would not be able to return that night.

"Then R. B. said to us, with a strange smile: 'what do you think of it?'

"'Nothing!' answered Jeannie; 'it's an unlucky accident: that's all.'

"R. B. led me apart: 'It is M. Vianne,' he said, 'sure enough, who has carried off Manuela!'

"I said it was impossible. 'On the contrary,' he rejoined, 'it is the only thing that is possible.'

"'But how? Did she see no one but him?'

"'She saw others; she often went out; twice a week

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she received calls. I introduced to her some English persons whom I met here. Every one regarded us as already husband and wife; some rich young men have no doubt joked about us, and said that Manuela might have done better than to take me, except for marriage. Many, I am sure, have looked at her with longing eyes, and thought of robbing me of her; but only one man could have felt for her that sudden and irresistible passion which smote your son: that is Doctor Vianne. Verily the faculty is destined to make my celibacy eternal. Thanks to it and to God!'

"'But why M. Vianne, so cold, so practical, so set?'—

"'Precisely! He has so mocked at love in her presence that he has rekindled the unquenchable longing that most women feel to conquer him who resists. We severely blamed Laurent for having innocently taken the part of a decoy and getting worsted. Still more innocently he has played the same part, and is still more seriously worsted. That is according to nature; we may laugh at what is comically fatal in nature, but it is nothing to be troubled about. Believe me, my friend, all this is for the best. Your son would have married Manuela on a point of honor. He was the victim of a feeble desire. Vianne acted more resolutely: he carried her off on the eve of her marriage; he yielded to a genuine passion so much more violent because he had checked and ridiculed love in himself. He is a very honorable man; there is no reason why Manuela should not be happy; let us think no more of the matter. Now I belong to you for ever. Write to my dear Laurent that I have always loved him, and that, thank God, never again shall a woman come between us. I will go whither you wish; my *châlet*, near your home, is ready for me. There is nothing to prevent our going together.'

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"There, my child, is the whole story of what has happened, and how we are situated. We go away day after to-morrow morning, and leave Sir Richard at his new home to embrace you an hour later; but why will you not come to meet us at the *châlet*, where he is going to spend the summer? We should see you an hour sooner, and we would go home together."

I did not hesitate, and the next evening I was walking toward the *châlet*, with my heart freed from the fear of losing Jeannie. My old friendship for M. Brudnel revived in all its strength, now free and void of all reproach. Our relations might still be a little delicate; but there mingled with them a certain need of laughing quietly together over the arrival of the "third robber," and an occasion of joint amusement came to us very timely to efface the mortification or the spites of the past.

As to Vianne, I did not believe one word of M. Brudnel's paradoxical suppositions. I thought that Manuela had fled to escape that loveless marriage, which had been, in turn, the goal of her ambition and her dread. Who knows, I asked myself, if she did not lie in order generously to release M. Brudnel from his pledge? Not deceiving herself as to the possibility of inspiring passion in him, she was bold, unselfish, and proud. Strange nature, capable of engaging itself, like a dancer at the theatre, as well as of shutting itself in a convent; it seems to me that praying and dancing filled out her life with Dolores. Indeed, this fidelity to spontaneous instinct, in defiance of reason and practical interests, is not so despicable. Purely natural inspirations have their own grandeur.

M. Brudnel's *châlet* looked lovely, with its ruddy lights in the blue darkness. The country was scented, as if for a festal day. I had not time to reach him when he alighted

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from his carriage. He threw himself into my arms, and called me his dear child: he was more than happy; he was gay. Jeannie was even more charming to me than usual. She did not know that her secret had been revealed to me: only M. Brudnel was aware that I had surprised it, and that my mother had been forced to impart it to me.

M. Brudnel was expected at the *châlet:* a delicious supper was served, and everybody ate with good appetite. The name of Manuela passed the lips of none of us, and there was a certain sprightly happiness in all our talk. After supper, Sir Richard took a light to inspect the arrangements of his new establishment. We went with him, and when I thought one chamber especially pleasant: "This shall be yours," he said eagerly; "for I hope you will again become my physician and companion."

"No," I said: "you are cured!"

"Cured on condition that I do not live alone!" and, whispering to me, he added: "Besides, it is quite necessary: your mother will tell you why."

I was impatient to know. After we got home, I questioned my mother. "It is really best for us," she said, "that till further orders you should live with your patron. Otherwise it would not be known, or would not be believed, that he was your best friend before he was ours; and he could not come to see us every day without giving rise to rumors that he was the husband or protector of your sister."

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IV.

I FOUND it very hard to be separated from Jeannie a part of the day; but I endured it. I had a delightful reception at the *châlet*. I was forced to resume my liberal salary, and my patron was more amiable, more affectionate, than he had ever been. I began to love him just as formerly. And yet I suffered from the change in my dear home habits. We spent several hours daily at my house: but I never saw Jeannie alone; and her affection for me was so generously shared, that I began to think my part too small. I did not let this appear. She adored her father: she may have disliked me for being jealous of him.

I strove to divert myself. From time to time I went away, pretending to go on a naturalist's expedition. I did not always go with M. Brudnel to our house. My efforts only rendered me more sad and more bitter.

The summer slipped away; and I felt not ill, but uneasy and nervous. My appetite failed, and I could not sleep. One evening when, as M. Brudnel was going to pay his daily visit to my mother, on the pretext of studying, I declined to accompany him, I took a great spite against myself, and determined to conquer my despondency. I set out on foot, and soon reached the little gate of our garden; but then I suddenly felt so weak, that I had scarcely time to enter and throw myself on the grass to avoid fainting. Surely I was wasting away. I remained there, bathed in a cold perspiration, when I heard M. Brudnel and my mother pass in front of the shrubbery, and sit down on a

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bench two steps away. I had not gained strength enough to rise: I did not wish to alarm my mother; so I kept still.

"It must come to an end," said M. Brudnel; "the trial is more than sufficient. His love for her has already made him ill: he will love her till his love destroys him, if this state of things continues. He is jealous of me, poor, dear child! and our duty is plain, — we must have them marry!"

"You know my scruples," my mother replied: "the large fortune that you have settled upon Jeannie; we are not rich, my son and I. I do not feel these scruples towards you, who know me; but Laurent will feel them, I am sure."

"Well, my dear friend, you will answer him that he is a son of the house, while Jeannie is a foundling. That is an off-set. The only serious question was, — Did he really love her; if, after having loved her as his sister, he could adore her as his wife? It is useless for Jeannie to tell us that she wants more affection than passion. She is all flame, all love, without knowing it. It has been the dream of her whole life; and, since she told me, I have thought of nothing but their union. Then what a disappointment to me, when I found that he loved another! Happily, that was only a squall, and the sun has risen more glorious than ever. I wanted to seem a detestable rival; for I saw clearly that at one time he hated me, when I strove with him to regain the fickle heart of Manuela. To marry that poor child was my only way of making him forget her. I succeeded; and, thanks to M. Vianne, the cure is even more complete. As to legal impediments, there are none. You are restrained only by the fear of having poor Fanny's secret guessed through the avowal that Jeannie is not the

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offspring of your marriage. My presence here may encourage a presentiment of the truth. Those sad events are nearly forgotten; yet a little thing could revive the old rumors; and Jeannie is so jealous of her mother's fame, that she would die rather than have the truth revealed. And I, too, am jealous of that precious memory. But I cannot — I ought not to — sacrifice my daughter to it. Let us, then, take courage. I will go away for a year, — two years, if it be necessary, — so that the public may forget me, and notice no coincidences. After to-morrow, you inform all your acquaintances that you took Jeannie from the Foundling Hospital, to console you for the loss of your own child, and have the banns published. I wish it, my dear madame, my worthy friend, — I earnestly wish it. Laurent will no longer be jealous of me when I am his father. A day will come when we shall part no more. Then he will love me as I love him."

I rose and approached them noiselessly. I fell at the feet of that noble man whom I had too often hated, and burst into tears.

"Wait!" he said, tenderly embracing me; "Jeannie's piano has stopped; she is coming here. I think you have sometimes doubted the exclusiveness of her affection; we must make her speak freely. Where were you concealed so that you could hear us?"

I explained that I did not hide myself, and that I had fallen in sheer weakness on reaching the grass of the lawn. "Well," he answered, "return thither, and don't stir."

I obeyed. Jeannie came. They made her take a seat between them. "Ah," said Sir Richard, "so we are sad to-day! There was complaining and despondency in the improvisation that we just heard. Is it because he did not come?"

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"Well, yes," she answered; "that is it. Mamma thought it her duty to convince him that I was his sister, so that he might never think of loving me. She has succeeded too well. He cannot love me now in another way."

"Yet he is very jealous of me!" said M. Brudnel.

"Good reason! Haven't brothers and sisters their jealousies too?"

"But he is ill with grief because he cannot be here all the time."

"Or he loves some one whom he goes to see at times when he might be here."

"Ah, Jeannie!" said my mother, "so you are jealous too!"

"Why shouldn't I be?"

"And your fine theories about unselfish love, about selfishness that one must overcome, about the joy of sacrificing one's own happiness to that of others?"

"Yes," said Jeannie, rising, "I can always do that. Let him love some one, and avow it; let him confide his passion to me, and I will help him with all my power; I will forget myself, and my devotion shall give me invincible strength."

"And will you be happy in your sacrifice? Not only afterwards, when you have accomplished it, but at the very moment of seeing Laurent at the feet of another?"

"Yes," said Jeannie with a struggle.

"Truly? Think! It is a very serious question that you are going to answer." Jeannie had risen. "Where are you going?" said my mother, detaining her.

"Let me go!" she answered in a choked voice. "I must weep! It is cowardly, I know; but did I say that I should not have moments of weakness and anguish? If virtue cost us nothing, it would be nothing."

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"But if it cost life?" said M. Brudnel, also drawing her back.

"If it cost life," replied Jeannie, "one would be too happy!"

"Ah, my Jeannie, this is despair, — it is, indeed!"

"Well, perhaps it is!" she cried, bursting into tears. "No, mother; tell me the truth: I want to know it now. Tell me whom he loves!"

"You — only you, in the whole world!" I cried, clasping her in my arms, where she fainted, suffocated with happiness.

I was not much stronger than she. Our beloved parents had to support us both. They made us sit down in their places, and withdrew. They were no less happy than we.

I always remember this first mingling of our souls as a dream in some enchanted island beyond the bounds of the possible world. We belonged no more to reality, which had stood like a wall so long between us. The children are few who, reared together, do not know one another too well for mutual idealization. It is not only the moral restraint instituted long ago that prevents them from loving one another too much; it is also the habit of seeing one another without illusion. It happened, in my case, that Jeannie was so pure and so perfect a being that I could compare with her no other in my memories. As to her, who had never been deceived as to our relationship, she had clung to me immovably, and never could admit that I ought not, at some time, to be given to her for her lifelong companion.

All this was very simple; but we needed hours for saying it, and it yet seemed to us that nothing had been said of what we had to say.

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M. Brudnel intended to leave us before the betrothal. I determined to ascertain for myself whether the fears as to the memory of Fanny Ellingston were well founded. It seemed to me that neither my mother nor he had considered how rapidly the lapse of more than twenty years washes away from indifferent minds impressions of particular events. The person who could best advise us in this matter was Sir Richard's banker at Bordeaux, who had also been the banker of the De Mauville family, and whom, for that reason, he had not dared to interrogate for fear of betraying himself.

I called on the banker on behalf of Sir Richard, bearing some funds for deposit, and succeeded in pleasing him so well that he invited me to dinner. Here is what I learned from his conversation, and that of others whom I questioned afterwards, with all necessary caution: —

The Marquis de Mauville, who died insane, was, according to general opinion, a man of unfortunate and contradictory nature, in whom no one could confidently trust. My informants went — as always happens — so far as to be unjust. They would not admit that he had any real grievances against his wife, whose fame, despite her error, remained spotless as snow. They spoke of her as the victim of her mother-in-law's hatred, and the mad jealousy of her husband. They declared that she had never been intimate with Sir Richard Brudnel, who was out of the country when the marquis killed, in his park, a charcoal-burner, whom he took for a rival. They added some details that I could not verify. They accused one of Fanny's sisters-in-law of carrying on, in the château, an intrigue which drew the suspicions of the marquis upon his unfortunate wife. In fine, opinion was unanimous in favor of the latter; and her connection with my parents at the time of her

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death had passed unnoticed in a great city, where we had held so insignificant a place. An inquest would have been necessary to bring out the facts whose revival we dreaded; and no one in the world had any motive for holding or demanding one. Nearly all the family of Mauville had disappeared. The estate had been sold; and no one of the name remained in the country.

From Bordeaux I went to Marmande, where my name was quite unknown, and found the same version, still more clogged with details, true or false, and still more unfavorable to the marquis, his mother, and sisters. Some persons remembered Mlle. Moessart, a worthy and amiable young girl, whom the marquis had driven away, they said, without reason, in a moment of anger. They had heard nothing of her since.

I could, therefore, banish Jeannie's fears and those of M. Brudnel. The banns were published in the joy of having no more partings to endure. The neighborhood was greatly astonished; but our position was so plain and so susceptible of proof; Pau is a city so given up to waiting on strangers; my mother and sister, moreover, were so irreproachable and so respected, that there was no malevolence or antagonism in the general surprise. M. Brudnel readily passed for our benefactor; but his interest in us was attributed to my services in his behalf; and this fact speedily gave me a greater fame than I could have gained by wonderful cures. I have been, ever since, the happiest of husbands, of sons, and of fathers, as well as the busiest of doctors. We have been able to buy a house larger and nearer town than M. Brudnel's *châlet*, and there we live with our best friend, whose life I hope to prolong till he can bless his grandchildren. But I must not bring this narrative to an end without transcribing a letter from Vianne.

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which I received at Pau a few days after my marriage :—

"Now, my friend, you are fully informed as to why I ceased, submissively and respectfully, to seek the hand of her whom you believed to be your sister. She must have told you that, seeing me very much troubled by her hesitation, and, knowing the strength of my character, she deigned to intrust to me the secret of her birth and that of her love for you. Give her the homage of a rejected admirer who will be always her and your most devoted friend.

"As for me, I have settled my destiny. Having withdrawn from Montpellier for four months, I returned thither the husband of a good, pretty, and lovable person whom you know. I carried her off on the eve of her marriage with that excellent and chivalrous Englishman who bears malice toward me, perhaps, but who ought not; for I think I did him the greatest service that one man ever rendered another, — that of saving him from a folly as fatal as it was generous. I found myself situated in relation to them just as you were, — with this difference, that I was not fondly attached to either, and that I did not indulge, on my own account, in any kind of romance. I ascertained the facts, without suffering myself to be deceived by appearances. On the one hand, a man sated with violent emotions, and come to the need of rest, preoccupied above all things by a paternal affection, which is the only healthful passion for his age, and sacrificing to the anticipated scruples of Jeannie his repose and his freedom; entering, in fine, with the sad smile of disillusion, upon the thorns of a preposterous marriage: on the other hand, a girl, weary with inactivity, sick, good-hearted too, especially good, but tired of loving in vain and running after phantoms, devot-

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ing herself unreasonably to an old man who neither wanted her, nor, having another family, needed a young wife to take care of him. Manuela knew too little of the world and of life to get on without wise and stern counsel. She, therefore, consulted me without concealing the foolishness and frivolity of her life, which, however, I was already aware of. She did not present herself to my eyes, as to yours, in the guise of an amusing enigma to be guessed. I took her as she is, to tell her, soberly and pitilessly, some truths less harsh, but more practical, than those you told her. I specially aimed at curing her so-called lesion of the heart, having verified my diagnosis. I offered her, not my idolatrous worship, — that would have been lying; nor my intoxicating caresses, — these are not a specialty: but simply marriage. She was afraid; she distrusted herself to the last minute, and suddenly — expecting to be married at eight o'clock — she came to me at two in the morning. I was pleased with her courage; and, an hour later, we were on the road to Italy, leaving her betrothed surprised, doubtless, but freed.

"I did not deceive her. I married her, and brought her out openly, to the great scandal of my fellow-townsmen, who would not bring their wives to see her; but I quietly expect each of them, the day after some fine illness that I have conjured away and cured. I am sure of a welcome, which will presently be accorded to my little wife, — so gentle, so timid, and so graceful. I am surely not an Arcadian shepherd, and still less a Lara; and if I have no prejudices in the choice of a wife, I certainly have no illusions. Because Manuela has no ties in the social world, and has no acquaintance with human affairs, I preferred her to any other. She belongs to me absolutely, sees only with my eyes, hears only with my ears, understands only

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from my lips. She is my property, and I tell her this without offending her; for I prove to her, by my devotion and my friendship, that she is a very beautiful and very precious thing. In fine, I have cured her. She is only fifteen; and the hope of a baby, which shall be her ideal and her all, guarantees to me the propriety of one who for long was contented with the dogs and parrots of her harem. I have cut off this resource against her 'soul wanderings,' but I have left her her terrible Dolores, whom I do not fear, — being, I flatter myself, as sharp-sighted and bright as she is. All that I tell you here is for us two: I tell you it so that you may not feel obliged to deplore my folly. On my part, I am far from doubting your happiness. You need the heights of the empyrean, as I need a 'flat.' I do not question the happiness of exalted social conditions, and once I aspired to them myself; but I have attained a sound and philosophic estimate of what is called 'happiness' in our defective and shadeless language. The word 'happiness' means something absolute which does not exist. 'Satisfaction' would strike you, and me too, as too brutal to take its place. I recognize and admit intellectual joys. I say, therefore, that happiness — a thing essentially relative — has this peculiar quality, — that it lends itself to all kinds of aspirations; otherwise it would be the portion of too few of the fortunate ones. Whereupon may God keep you in health; and be sure that I am, as formerly, your faithful

MÉDARD VIANNE.

"*Postscript.* — My wife asks if it would be proper to send her compliments. I give her liberty to say some friendly words. In ten years from now — remember the date — we will go to shake hands with you; and whatever things are painful or delicate shall be as if they never had been."

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This letter, which I felt it my duty to show to Sir Richard, reassured him as to Manuela's fate, in which, though he rejoiced in the recovery of his freedom, he always felt an interest. Some years after this, thinking of setting his affairs in order, he asked us, with charming simplicity, to allow him to restore to her, by will, the dowry that he had always intended for her, but which, during his life, Vianne had refused. Jeannie agreeing, it was settled that the legacy should stand.

Truly Vianne was right in regarding what we call 'happiness' as a thing relative to the idea one forms of it; but it seems to us — Jeannie and me — that there is a bliss which escapes the restraint of definitions, and which consists in the unswerving aspirations to the highest enjoyments of mind and heart.

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